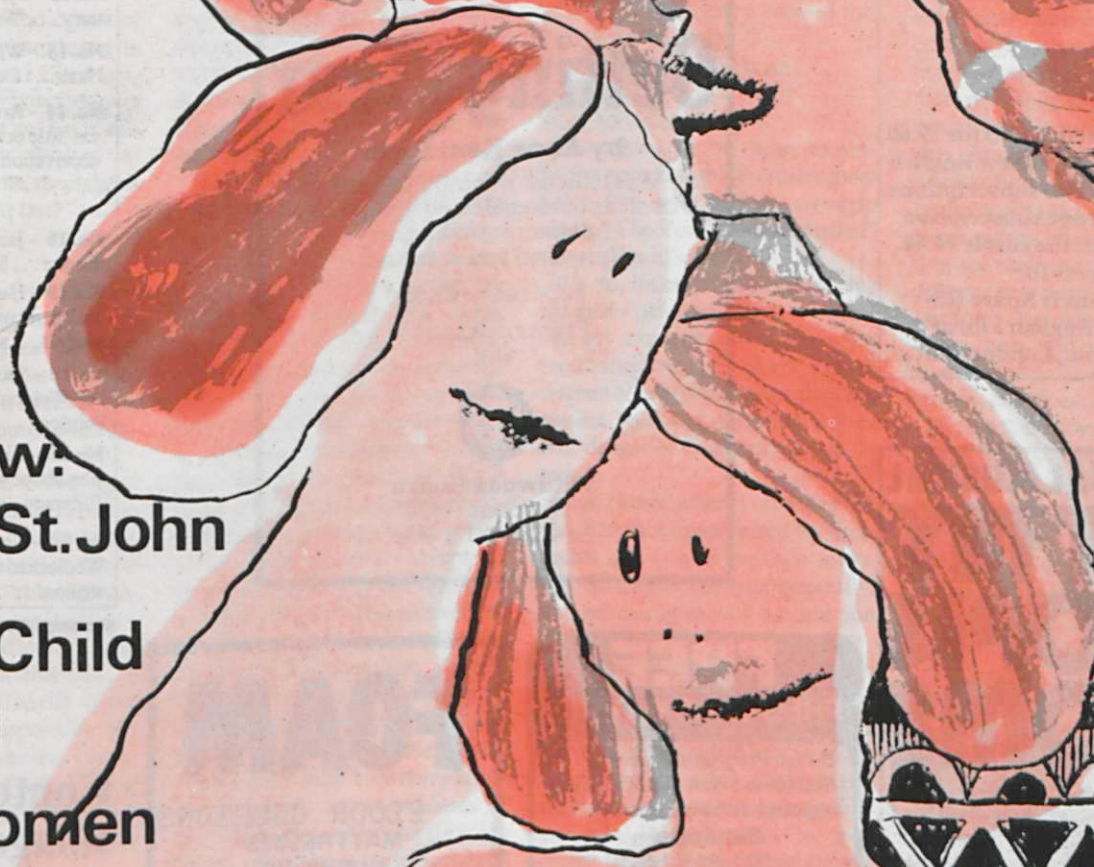


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Yours faithfully, Mrs. B. Newman

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"The housewife" *See letter above

Dear Spare Rib,

As a housewife and mother and therefore officially unemployed! (3 kids) Cor! I had a great to-do in getting credit for goods worth approx. £50. I had to be guaranteed and witnessed etc.

As I had given no indication of being a women's lib supporter in my credit claim, apart from perhaps stating my age as being over 21, I was surprised to have this understanding letter written to me. Do you think the message is really getting home at last?

Best wishes,
Jill Jones,
Norwich.

My reply to Mrs Newman, I quite agree, it is a great pity that women's liberation hasn't 'reached' the housewife yet, because that is just the person women's liberation must reach.

As I daily run and bring up 3 children to be, presumably, future rates and tax payers, I am certainly working; and also consider myself to be 'self-employed' although unrecognized as such.

A particular difficulty that women are facing at this time is that they are not officially 'paid' for doing the most responsible job that anyone could ever do. Therefore I feel a sense of humiliation and shame in being treated as a child, a 'minor' when applying for credit.

I am a trustworthy person, otherwise I wouldn't be doing the work I am doing, and I'm really hoping that firms such as Joan Allen Electronics, presumably headed by a woman, may quickly turn their attention to the struggle for equality, by women for women everywhere.

Best Wishes, Jill Jones.

Advertising?

Dear Spare Rib,

I have just recently returned to New Zealand after spending some years in London. I decided to subscribe to Spare Rib - simply on the basis that there were no sexist advertisements in it. I eagerly awaited the arrival of the first copies - imagine my extreme disappointment on opening the second one to arrive. Staring me in the face is the sell-out of all time - a feminist magazine running a sex-exploitation ad!

My husband pointed out your 'explanation' on page 5, but I am not satisfied. What does it matter if Dana chose the outfit and photograph - the fact remains that the photograph offends the basic principles of women's liberation and you should have refused to run RCA's advertisement on that basis. It would have been far better to print an explanation on that page along the lines of 'RCA booked this space but the advertisement supplied was a sexist one, so we decided not to accept it. Perhaps you can pay for the space instead?' Perhaps you cannot ask for donations like this but I'm sure hundreds of Spare Rib readers would be willing to contribute something to its costs rather than have such a monumental let down.

In the same issue I see complaints re similar ads in other issues of Spare Rib. Please don't let finances bring your very high standard down. I'm sure an appeal such as you ran in the middle pages of this issue (No. 24) will bring sturdy support. Here's hoping anyway, all my best wishes for the future,
Yours in sisterhood,
Candid Rivers,
Auckland,
New Zealand.

Keep young and beautiful, the continuing saga

Dear Spare Rib,

I wrote to Radio 1 regarding the 'Keep Young and Beautiful Spot' on the David Hamilton Show. I noticed you printed my letter to you about it in Issue No. 25. I enclose a copy of the reply I received. I also enclose a copy of the letter I sent in reply.

Yours faithfully, Pat Scott,
Southampton.

Dear Mrs. Scott,

You sound to be quite an unhappy person and I am really most sorry that you feel so strongly about "The Young and Beautiful" tips on David's show.

We do, indeed, have beauty tips for men - quite regularly.

In my experience, which is not inconsiderable, I don't think women take drugs because they are getting "old and decrepit" - they take drugs for other reasons, as do men.

I don't know where you culled the idea that men are admired for their brains and women for their looks. This is clearly not true generally, you have only to look around you daily.

The idea of the tips is to pass on little hints to help some of our listeners. None of the tips will help anyone look beautiful, but make a little more of what they've got, maybe. I've yet to meet a very tiny girl who doesn't want to look pretty like mummy or an elderly lady who wouldn't appreciate a tip on hair care or a way to keep false teeth fresher. It has nothing to do with the "Keep Young and Beautiful" song which starts the spot, which is humorous light-hearted and not meant to be taken seriously. I'm sorry that you did. I'm sorry that you felt compelled to write your letter to David with

such vehement language.

However, I do thank you for your interest.

Yours sincerely,
Doreen Davies,
Executive Producer, Radio 1.

Dear Ms. Davies,

My feelings concerning the 'Keep Young and Beautiful' song, have nothing to do with my happiness or unhappiness. They are based on not only mine, but many other women's experiences of their position in society.

Inequality is clearly the state of affairs, 'Witness Wages' the percentage of women in higher education, the professions, union executives and parliament.

This is maintained by the conditioning metered out to both males and females. Little girls are expected to be domesticated and pretty, little boys are allowed to be mischievous and dirty, and to learn by their own initiative.

Adolescent girls and women are encouraged to spend time on their appearance, while adolescent boys and men spend time on jobs and careers. Excess importance then is placed for women on their appearance - the more attractive they are, the more acceptable they are.

In this song you are encouraging the already stressful state of so called unattractive women by emphasizing that their acceptability is dependant upon their 'beauty' - they should do all they can to be 'beautiful' in order that they should be loved. 'Attractive' women find it easier, but having been encouraged to place importance on their physical appearance, they see their success in the world only in these terms. This causes in one form or another a great deal of upset, hurt and unhappiness, as women try to become what they are not, nor should be.

It is for these reasons that I object to the song you play. For it is far from 'humorous and light-hearted' but reinforces the false values that women try their hardest to reach.

We do not object per se to tips, but to the implication, indeed the assertion, that it is necessary to comply to a false beauty stereotype to be 'loved'.

The vehement language may I say, was the result of justifiable anger.

The drugs I mentioned referred to those such as tranquilisers used by many because they are unhappy. I am sorry I did not make this clear. The unhappiness could more helpfully be alleviated, perhaps, by a better understanding of the role-playing in this society and a rejection of many false standards it adheres to.

If my views are not clear from this brief summary, I would be pleased to expand further.

Yours sincerely, Pat Scott (Ms) ▶



New old mistress

Dear Spare Rib,
I noticed that the cover picture on the Penguin edition of Elizabeth Maver's book *The Ladies of Llangollen* is credited to the nineteenth century artist Lady Leighton. The painting is exquisite in detail and portrayal of character.
Yours, Annemarie Austin,
Weston-super-Mare.

Sterilisation

Dear Spare Rib,
About two years ago, and after a long fight with my doctor, I obtained the new operation for sterilisation on the National Health. I am wondering if any other women have had the same problems as me - a complete change in my attitude to sex (which I previously enjoyed) - at times revulsion at the mere thought of intercourse, and in fact my mental attitude to everything connected with home, husband and family. I was warned that the operation can bring the change forward - and I have now found an enlightened doctor who has admitted that this could be the cause of my misery. I was content to 'leave things' until I read a pathetic letter from a woman in a Sunday paper saying that after this operation she could only have sex with her husband if she was drunk - and was it the operation. The answer was curt - no, she was imagining things, the paper said. But I know how she felt. If anyone else has or has had these problems, please write to me. Having had two years hell I would like at least know if I am alone with this problem, and if possible how to become reasonably 'normal' again.
Nancy Jones,
169 Station Road,
Gt. Billing, Northampton.

Criminal Art

Dear Sisters,
The aesthetic and sociological implications of the work of artists of both sexes are demonstrating two facts,
1. Anything that can be sold (including the soul) can become art, and
2. Art is simply another legal transaction allowing only minor infringements of the 'laws of good taste'. (compare Judy Clarke's work, Spare Rib No. 23, and the work of her myriad male colleagues).

The unquestioning acceptance of such work finds correspondences in the 'liberal' approaches to 'changing the world'. The history of art is the history of legal transactions sprinkled occasionally with the point made in No. 2. The consumer item status of art is perpetuated (along with the rest of capitalist culture) be restricting it to working within the law, thus prolonging the death-throes of the three great muses of (art) life - fame, fortune and success. The 'aesthetic, metaphysical, political and social' implications of one, *stolen*, unassisted readymade (no matter what it is) are enough to make our own intentions clear. If artists could be bothered to work them out there'd be nothing left for sale. If Marcel Duchamp had stolen his first readymade the history of modern art would have been radically different. However, such work has been left to the criminal artists.

No one will buy a stolen readymade and no one will exhibit them. Such work can have no legal, economic, support system. By 'patronising' art made from illegal activities the patrons themselves become 'accessories after the fact'

and liable to imprisonment along with the artists. Such artists must work anonymously. The public results of their work are more likely to be documented in police-files rather than between the pages and walls of the establishment, art-media. The kind of art that finds its materials and processes in unlawful activities is from the very beginning opposed to property speculation and a career in conservative aesthetics to which normal art has allied itself.

The energy expended and tapped in criminal art finds its results surfacing in the most surprising places. Deliberately working as an 'anonymous group' negates the possibility of any individual super stars rising on the backs of the dispossessed. (We are not Robin Hoods secretly robbing the rich and giving to the poor, rather we seek to completely re-orientate attitudes to 'art-making' and initiate an entirely different domain for 'art-work'.) We have no wish to document our 'crimes' or neatly frame any evidence of our illegal activities. Suffice to say that what we do is illegal and we reject the legality of the normal artist no matter how 'radical' the work is said to be. One, *stolen*, unassisted readymade is enough to outline our entire trajectory. Not only must the world 'order' be constantly revolutionised and subverted but also the individual. This is the only function for art that can open up new horizons and expose those worn-out myths of 'creation'. A legal art is only another form of 'housewives valium'. Culture is legal, long live the after-culture of the criminal arts!

Love in revolution,
The arts anonymous collective.

Job Satisfaction

Dear Spare Rib,
Ha! Ha! The very phrase forces a hollow laugh from me.

This is something men talk about concerning *their* work. But it never seems to occur to them that women should feel the need for such a thing.

The 19th century Victorian attitude still pervades the male chauvinist world. A woman should be happy with her lot, and thankful, and grateful to her husband for the weekly housekeeping he bestows on her - out of his great beneficence - always letting her ask for it first!

Even the BBC 'popular' radio is involved in the conspiracy to try to keep women happy with their lot, by putting on day-long, brain-washing programmes, specifically designed to do just that.

But what job satisfaction does housework provide when everything one does is *undone* by the end of the day?

Dishes are washed - and dirtied

again.

Floors are cleaned - and dirtied. Beds are made (sometimes), but soon that is undone.

Futile is the word which sums it up - and dusting is the most futile task in the world. Dust, the great enemy, is always with us. No matter what great technical aids are brought to bear against it, the dust remains, and will remain, long after we are gone.

Hours can be spent preparing a meal - to what avail? Some will shovel it down, without a word. Some will pull a face, and refuse to eat it, or eat it under protest, which then puts it in the form of a punishment.

Perhaps, occasionally, someone will say thank you... but *always*, one is left with further hours of drudgery and servitude, clearing up after it all.

No, there is no job satisfaction here.

There is no incentive. Why shouldn't housewives be paid a decent rate for the job? Is it not just about the only unpaid, full-time, (plus overtime) job in the world?

Let us do away with money altogether, or let each be paid according to his or *her* value.

'The labourer is worthy of his, or *her* hire!'

Pamela Greenwood, Yelverton, Devon.

Understanding men

Dear Spare Rib,
Since reading your magazine I have been able to come to terms with problems which I now know I share with many other women. However, I do think you are a little too anti-men.

I think most men are just plain ignorant when it comes to women, but if they don't know what we want it is up to us to tell them. The reason so many men are unwilling to accept us on an equal basis is that for centuries women have just accepted their subservient role. If a man is brought up seeing his mother happily accepting that she must cook, wash, sew and clean and do everything in her power to please her man, without stopping to think of herself as a person in her own right with just as much to offer the world in every way, then that man will find it very hard to shake off when he meets a woman who is a little more demanding. All his previous concepts of woman are shattered.

This has happened to my husband. He reads your magazine with interest but his first reaction is to put up a defensive.

All I am trying to say is please let us try to understand men a bit more then maybe they will start trying to understand us. That's all. Carry on the good work. Yours is the best paper around.

Susan Stebbings, Beckenham, Kent.

Cover illustration by Christine Roche.

Letters 3,4

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Please send a stamped addressed envelope with all unsolicited manuscripts.

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Spare Rib collective: Rose Ades, Marion Fudger, Pat Kahn, Rosie Parker, Marsha Rowe, Ann Scott, Ann Smith

ANOREXIA NERVOSA



For two years we've been intending to discuss anorexia nervosa because of the letters we've received on the subject and the number of women, with some experience of the illness, who have come to the office and told us how important they believe it is for people to know more about anorexia nervosa. This article grew out of our talks with them

It is impossible to know how widespread anorexia nervosa has become because comparatively few people receive treatment, but there is no doubt that it is spreading.

Rosie Parker and Sarah Mauger

"All I want is to become thinner and thinner. It is this eternal tension between wanting to become thin and not giving up eating that is so exhausting. In all other points I am reasonable, but I know on this point I am crazy I am really ruining myself in this endless struggle against my nature. Fate wanted me to be heavy and strong but I want to be thin and delicate." Wrote Ellen West in her diary before she committed suicide after having anorexia nervosa for 13 years. Anorexia nervosa is an illness brought about by psychological factors, but the most obvious physical symptom of the underlying disturbances and anxieties is a relentless pursuit of thinness leading to a horrifying emaciation. An anorexic will systematically starve herself and yet, like Ellen West, remain obsessed with food. And like Ellen West the vast majority of anorexics are adolescent girls. We believe that anorexia nervosa is precipitated by the impossible demands, expectations and restrictions of the feminine stereotype - why should Ellen West have wanted so desperately to be thin and delicate?

Nothing connected with anorexia nervosa is simple and straight forward; particularly because starvation creates a wide range of physical symptoms, including hormonal imbalance, amenorrhoea (no periods), constipation, slow pulse rate and respiration, sleep disturbance, hypothermia, growth of extra hair on the body, and changes in the colour and texture of existing hair, nails and skin. Obviously these changes in their turn affect the psychological state of the anorexic, so the disease is never static, developing out of the interaction of physiological, psychological and social factors.

Genuine anorexia is distinguished from other mental conditions involving weight loss and amenorrhoea because patients starve themselves in order to become thin rather than because they find the act of eating in itself frightening or disturbing. Nevertheless anorexia nervosa is a blanket term covering a wide variety of individual differences - each case is obviously unique. Only now are psychiatrists beginning to recognise the different categories of anorexia nervosa. Anorexia is spreading but it remains a condition affecting women from backgrounds where food is plentiful; where thinness is praised; where 'to eat like a bird' is considered attractive, and greed is frowned upon. It is apparently more common in upper and middle class girls but that could be because they have easier access to psychiatrists. Or, rather their friends and relatives do, because anorexics rarely seek help themselves, insisting that there's nothing the matter with them. In a way they are right because in places where food is scarce an anorexic's ability to remain so active with so little food would be greatly valued. Anorexia nervosa is bound up with the values of society.

In a recent article in the *Observer*, Robert Shields tried to solve the mystery of the increase in anorexia nervosa and quite rightly pointed out the connection between the condition and the feminine stereotype but through his misunderstanding of the women's movement failed to see the real significance of the link. He wrote, "Anorexia Nervosa is an attempt to deny one's essential femaleness. . . Womanliness, motherliness and femininity are all concepts about which we are now

ambivalent – and the negative overtones may well have been strengthened by some of the more belligerent utterances of extreme feminist groups."

These "belligerent utterances" are of course the positive reaction to understanding the female role and represent a struggle to confront contradictions inherent in the feminine stereotype. Not the least of these being that a woman's source of self respect, social acceptance and economic support lies in pleasing others. Apparently her much needed acceptance and self respect can only be attained through negative values; through passivity, weakness and dependence. While women in the movement can find confirmation of the impossibility of the women's role by talking to each other, anorexics struggle in increasing isolation to conform to femininity. Ironically their solution is as full of contradictions and just as destructive as the stereotype itself.

There is a parallel to anorexia nervosa in the way that some women turn to marriage. Many believe that marriage is a way of gaining independence from their family as well as social integration. In fact it usually provides another dependency. An anorexic struggles to lose weight, refusing food as a gesture of independence in the belief that slimness will somehow solve all her problems. Dr. Hilde Bruch in her excellent book *Eating disorders, Obesity, Anorexia, and the person within*, the result of forty years work with anorexics, writes, "The anorexics struggle against feeling enslaved, exploited and not being permitted to lead a life of their own, they would rather starve than continue a life of accommodation. In this blind search for a sense of identity and selfhood they will not accept anything that their parents or the world around them has to offer. "Paradoxically, the weakness arising out of their starved state increases their dependence on their family and their sense of isolation. Though desiring independence, an anorexic is incapable of achieving it partly due to her upbringing and partly due to women's role as dependant. So anorexia nervosa is at once a struggle for independence and a way of continuing to be dependent. However, the connection between the attempt to lead a life of one's own and a refusal to eat at the family table is obvious. To reject a mother's food is to reject her.

In order not to eat at meal times, anorexics resort to secret snacking. R. Bilz suggests that such eating patterns are a throwback to a more primitive, vagabond type of feeding; a flight from the feudal organisation of the family table. There is far more to it than that. Anorexics are proud of their ability not to eat or not to be seen eating, and as Hilde Bruch writes, anorexia nervosa is a struggle to achieve a sense of self respect. Most women can understand why dieting is associated with a sense of achievement. Most of us are familiar with a fear of fatness which is both encouraged and exploited by the slimming industry. And for a great many women manipulation of their own bodies is too often their only means of gaining a sense of accomplishment. The link between social status and slimness is both real and imagined. It's real because fat people are discriminated against: it's imaginary because the thin, delicate ideal image of femininity only increases a person's sense of ineffectuality.

Hilde Bruch noticed that all her patients suffered from a paralyzing sense of ineffectiveness, a sense of being controlled from outside and even of not owning their bodies. Their rigid control of their eating habits is a desperate attempt to gain control of their bodies and to be self directing. To them self-starvation is evidence of strength. "The hungrier they feel, the more inviting food looks, the more important it becomes not to eat," wrote Catherine Sherlock in a letter to Spare Rib. But as the illness develops and starvation increases feelings of hunger diminish. Many anorexics cease to feel hungry but are left with a terror of what will happen to them if they begin to eat normally, and starvation becomes compulsive partly because it conceals a sense of helplessness and a conviction that complete loss of self control is just around the corner. One bite, they believe, will open the flood gates to an enormous eating binge and hopeless self hatred. And it often does, partly in reaction to their starved state. Judith, described by Dr. Peter Dally in his book *Anorexia Nervosa*, is typical. She dieted until she weighed 98 pounds (she was 5 feet 6 inches tall). One morning while helping her mother she licked a jammy spoon and immediately experienced such a craving for bread and jam that she ate a large loaf of bread and several pots of jam followed by all the biscuits and cakes in the house. Outbursts of overeating continued, particularly at night, and her weight rose to 160 pounds. She said that she did not feel satiated while she was eating, although after stopping she felt bloated and uncomfortable. For several days after eating she felt miserable, dirty and suicidal. Anorexics don't starve themselves to kill themselves; they contemplate suicide when they lose control and stuff themselves. Some compensate for compulsive eating by making themselves sick. Vomiting soon becomes involuntary and combined with the enormous doses of laxatives and diuretics which anorexics often administer to themselves, leads to serious metabolic and electrolyte complications.

Hunger and fullness obviously played no part in Judith's eating patterns, and both Dr. Dally and Dr. Bruch see this as one of the key factors in the condition. Anorexics have real perceptual blocks and fail to recognise hunger or misinterpret their bodily sensations, sometimes experiencing a feeling of extreme fullness after only one mouthful. They confuse hunger with other physical or emotional needs. Most of us are familiar with these feelings in a mild form, and have at one time or another, eaten to cheer ourselves up rather than to fill ourselves up.

Dr Bruch blames this inability to interpret sensations correctly on over controlling parents; "mothers who superimposed on the child their own concept of her needs." If the child's wants are at odds with the responses she receives from her mother or whoever is looking after her, she'll soon begin to rely on signals coming from outside to tell her when to eat and how much. Disordered food regulation is the most obvious sign of a lack of inner directedness but it is usually accompanied by a general sense of inadequacy which, in Dr. Bruch's words, "is related to persistent, though subtle or seemingly insignificant errors which have interfered with a child developing inner directedness and autonomy." Obviously a girl is more likely to suffer from an overcontrolled childhood than a boy in whom independence, aggression and forcefulness is prized and praised.

In Dr. Dally's study of 140 anorexics, not surprisingly, three quarters had domineering, overprotective parents. Some were rejecting of their children, some were ambivalent towards them but all had great expectations of them. The mothers, frustrated as far as their own ambitions were concerned, held out great hopes for their daughters. The fathers were often not as successful as they would like to have been and placed great value on physical appearance, wanting an attractive daughter as a source of personal status.

As children, future anorexics responded to their parent's pressures and ambitions by working very hard at school, becoming good at games, and being clean, tidy and helpful at home. Model children is how their parents describe them. But their conformism and perfectionism hides a sense of inadequacy and fear of failure which emerge when life makes demands on them they feel they cannot fulfil, or when ways of meeting other people's expectations of them are blocked.

While girls usually develop anorexia nervosa between 14 and 23, boys more often become anorexic at 10 to 12 years old. At that age his position is almost as ambiguous as a girl's at adolescence. He is dependent on his parents, the options open to him are restricted and yet demands are made on him to exert a measure of independence and to be successful. Anorexia nervosa develops when he moves to a new environment where he feels incapable of establishing himself, making friends, etc. He expresses his dissatisfaction with himself as feeling too fat. At puberty he joins the dominant class, and independence is usually granted unquestioningly. Anorexia nervosa does occasionally occur in teenage boys, but it is the exception rather than the rule.

Puberty for a girl who has been struggling to make herself perfect and to fulfil other people's demands, is catastrophic. It's no longer enough to come top of her class or be good at games or riding horses. Success becomes synonymous with looking right and being popular. "I was trying to be what other people thought I was. I am an unknown quantity – it all began with my mother's obsession with social success." Commented one anorexic girl. And Catherine Sherlock writes of an adolescent girl, "She is encouraged to think of herself only as a body, to be narcissistic, to think of nothing but her appearance, to force her body to look identical to the slim, conformist figures she sees are admired by others."

Social success for a girl means not only being slim but also being gay, infantile, fun and vivacious; characteristics unlikely to come out of passive conformist childhood. Susan, who developed anorexia nervosa at 13 and at 30 has never menstruated, blames it on the sense of social rejection she experienced on first going to boarding school. She wrote, "I think it is perhaps possible that some people are born old and somehow they always remain detached and remote and sometimes even alienated and estranged from youth." She failed to make friends; failed to be sufficiently "fun". Like many anorexics she had a fixed picture in her mind of a fat personality and a thin personality. The thin person works hard, is socially active, well groomed, well dressed, but deep down is a selfish, undersirable person who lacks inner qualities and who relies on looks and putting over a social facade. The fat person on the other hand procrastinates with her studies, is unhappy, mopes about at home but is deep down a worthwhile person. The conflict is that to be approved of and successful means being a thin person but to be honest and true to herself she should be a fat person.

Precipitating factors often seem insignificant to an outsider; any evidence of failure is enough to spark off compulsive non-eating to make a girl feel better about herself. (Although only about 30% to 50% of future anorexics are genuinely overweight.) Sometimes failing an exam

At once a struggle for independence and a way of continuing to be dependent

is a cause, and considering the kind of education so many girls receive it is hardly surprising that a large number of Dr. Dally's patients traced their illness back to failing exams.

Bodily changes at adolescence are another precipitating factor. Developing breasts and hips is horrifying for a girl who fantasized about being a boy in childhood – and a number of anorexic girls did. "Being like a boy is equivalent to wishing to be effective," writes Dr. Hilde Bruch. Anyway, the development of a female figure puts an end to dreams of being a "long legged prince", and for such girls dieting is a retreat into childhood. It's a very real retreat because starvation has a regressive effect on people and they do become extremely child-like. No-one quite understands the personality changes associated with starvation.

For others it represents a fight to adapt to femininity. Some go all out for the trappings of femininity wearing heavy, almost garish, make-up and dying their hair blond. While it announces their availability – boyfriends are status symbols – it also represents a move away and against their parents. For one anorexic we knew in the sixties, white pearlised lips and strawberry blond hair were preludes to self starvation.

At the same time as being a struggle for independence, anorexia is, as we've said, a plea to remain dependent. A dependence which is encouraged by the anorexic's mother who often want their daughters to remain children and to stay with them. These mothers often unconsciously hinder their daughter's development, avoiding all discussion of sexuality etc. A 16 year old anorexic was afraid of being "strong" because she wanted to be weak and ethereal so that she could accept everyone's help without feeling guilty. At the same time she was extremely active and perfectionist, and would not permit herself to go to sleep until she had done exercises to the point of total exhaustion. Another, slightly older woman whose sense of inadequacy made her intensely ambitious, used her drawn and haggard looks to help her up the ladder.

Not surprisingly, anorexics are difficult to live with because their ambivalent attitude towards those they love create terrible feelings of guilt in them. Some retire from their families, living in their bedrooms and only eating at night, others take over the kitchen and cook compulsively, forcing people to eat the food they themselves refuse to touch. Often they become hyperactive – a grim parallel to the housewife who feels guilty if she allows herself a moment's rest. Susan, mentioned earlier, would not stop moving for six months. Sometimes this is done to impress people with how well they are, sometimes it is done to burn calories and speed weight loss, sometimes it is a cry for the help which they can only accept when totally worn out. Restless activity is also another by-product of a state of starvation which only ceases when starvation becomes really acute. And it is yet another manifestation of an anorexic's faulty understanding of her bodily sensations – she doesn't recognise fatigue. Similar reasons lie behind her denial of her emaciation; she really *cannot see* how thin she is.

Along with compulsive cooking goes lying about food. Anorexics may be the most truthful people in all other respects but they will go to any lengths of deceit to avoid being forced to eat.

We've not discussed the conventional symbolism of eating, partly because to concentrate on food and eating only as a symbolic expression of sexual conflicts, a substitute for love, aggression or whatever too often leads to the neglect of the context of a woman's development and the underlying social causes. Psychoanalysts for a long time interpreted eating disorders as an expression of an internalized sexual conflict; "The wish to be impregnated through the mouth which results at times in compulsive eating, and at other times in guilt and consequent rejection of food." According to this view the main symptoms of anorexia are expressions of pregnancy fantasies and fears. Anorexics are often very frightened of sex and pregnancy, but M.P. Selvini sees their attitude as yet another manifestation of general insecurity or immaturity, rather than the reason for their self starvation. From her study of anorexics she concluded that their fear of sex and pregnancy is really the fear of being invaded by an object; understandable in people with a fragile sense of autonomy.

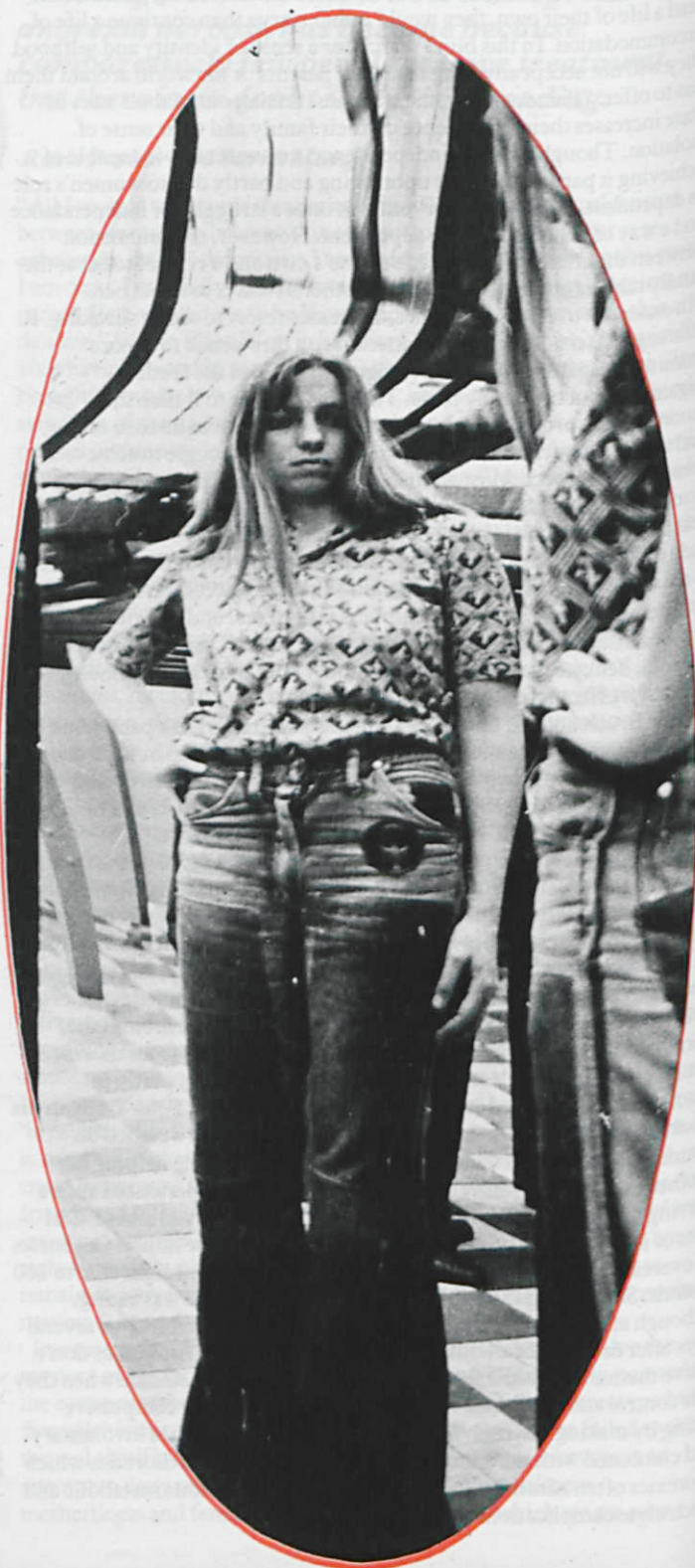
Nevertheless a distressing sexual experience is a common precipitating factor in anorexia nervosa, and the fear of pregnancy can be one of the biggest drives behind compulsive dieting because consciously or unconsciously the patient knows that dieting suppresses ovulation. Periods usually stop after a stone has been lost. Although some women stop menstruating before they begin dieting because the menstrual cycle and the output of hormones are affected by stress – the stress that leads

to self starvation. Sexual desire also disappears with severe weight loss – another reason for an anorexic's isolation from her contemporaries.

Even after a woman has regained 75% of her normal weight it will often take a year or two before ovulation starts and her periods begin. Amenorrhoea is unlikely to harm anyone and the majority of anorexics are able to have children once they are cured.

No one treatment is suitable for all anorexics because, as we have said, each case is unique and the roots, symptoms and precipitating factors we've described vary from individual to individual. However, all forms of treatment which re-inforce a sense of helplessness and passivity in a person are disastrous. But therapy in which the patient feels like a participant rather than a recipient has been successful. Re-feeding alone is obviously useless but it is necessary. It's equally necessary to separate an anorexic from her family, and Dr. Bruch feels that the family usually needs therapy as badly as the anorexic herself.

Dr. Dally describes a method of enforced bedrest for anorexics in hospital with restrictions on the patients movements being lifted as



Starvation becomes compulsive partly because it conceals a sense of helplessness

weight targets are reached. He used drug therapy – chlorpromazine and insulin – in conjunction with this method, and out of 71 patients treated, 27 were readmitted within two years, while some became compulsive eaters.

Dr. Oscar Hill points out that there is a danger in using drugs such as insulin to increase a patient's appetite because sudden gains in weight and changes in shape are terrifying experiences for someone who is frightened of fatness and all its connotations. He advocates a weight increase of not more than 1 or 2 lbs a week.

Even if the treatment is successful, and more and more cases are being cured, the same conditions await a woman returning to the world outside the hospital. And anorexia nervosa will continue to spread for as long as the reality of women's lives continues to clash with the mirage of the feminine stereotype.

Anorexia Nervosa by Peter Dally, published by Heinemann Medical Books.

Eating disorders, Obesity, Anorexia Nervosa and the Person Within by Hilde Bruch, published by Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Anorexics Aid is self supporting group recently started for anorexics and their families. They hold monthly discussion meetings to talk about their problems and to share information. People keep in touch between meetings by individual arrangements. Pat Hartley, one of the group, has already compiled a National Register of over 500 members. The group hopes to establish a trust fund to enable more research to be carried out.

Anorexics Aid, c/o 1, Pool End Close, Macclesfield, Cheshire

Louise Miller and Gillian Beaumont have both had anorexia nervosa. Louise started to starve compulsively at 13 and Gillian at 24. They describe what it meant to them, the cures that were tried on them, and the aftermath.

It was like living in a tin, with anorexia as the tin and a great blanket of unhappiness inside.

I was a strong child. I looked after my brothers and sisters because my mother was incredibly ill for years. But by the time I was 12 my brothers and sisters no longer needed me and I had established no other relationship with them beyond being the bossy older sister. I felt that I had no role at home.

Then I went to boarding school and immediately felt at an enormous disadvantage. From being the brightest girl in a small country neighborhood I was suddenly amongst 800 girls, all much more sophisticated than I was, and as bright if not brighter. It was an intensely competitive school; I couldn't cope and was completely lost.

I began to develop pains which had no apparent organic cause and spent most of the term in the sanatorium. There I felt secure and received all the love and attention I wanted, not by being a whole person but by being a sick person.

Like most of the girls I wanted a best friend and made a series of attempts at forming friendships which all fell through because I put such demands on people, wanting them to provide the security I lacked. Finally I did make friends and was starting to be happy at school when she wrote me a letter saying, "Dear Louise, I don't want to be your best friend, I want to be Carol's best friend." It happens to everybody I know, but something broke in me and I stopped eating.

I couldn't and wouldn't eat, or was it that I wouldn't and couldn't. All the days and months after that are a bewildering kaleidoscope in retrospect. People telling me to eat, cajoling, forcing, staring, weighing, measuring. Complaining and lying, lying long hours awake at night, waiting rigid for dawn and then the horror of breakfast.

I couldn't express what I was feeling, not eating was secondary to a sensation of total rejection and failure. I was rejected by the girls at school and simultaneously by my family who could not accept the kind of person I had to become in order to be liked by the girls at school. I suppose, looking back, that it was a retreat into the security and certainty of childhood and a plea to be loved and looked after.

A total impasse developed with my family. It was a situation of, "I will only eat when you love me for what I am", versus, "Eat and then we will love you." I couldn't eat, feeling continually choked and full up, with tight neck and stomach muscles. Simultaneously I felt

intensely guilty about my parents; I owed them a great deal and, anyway, you do feel guilty if people want you to eat and you feel utterly unable to eat.

I became incapable of communicating with people or concentrating on anything. I forced myself into constant physical activity, trying to walk off tension. It was a way of doing something; a way of keeping control. Then I put all my energy into exams. I knew that I would get worse unless I had some proof that I wasn't a complete failure, but of course, as I was unable to concentrate, it took me ten hours to do what most people could do in two.

Meanwhile I dropped to four stone. I didn't see myself as thin but I knew that I was because I was always being weighed and forced to eat complan and drink hydrochloric acid to stimulate my appetite.

I believed that my mother wanted me to go to England. So after A Levels I came to London (we lived in Rhodesia) and spent six months living entirely alone. I forced myself to live on 10p a day, creating a mad logic for not eating. If you are very thin, not eating is illogical but I still had this compulsion to punish myself and this constant sense of guilt.

Starvation leads to stealing, and sometimes I was unable to resist, taking say a peach from a fruit stall. I always returned the things I stole, but lost all sense of respect in the process.

I became increasingly cut off from other people. I did go out with men but sex was completely alien to me. (I've never menstruated). And, as I felt that I had to conceal my sense of desolation, relationships always remained very superficial.

Then I tried to commit suicide and went into hospital for five months. For the first weeks I was so heavily drugged that I only surfaced three times a day. But my initial feeling was one of relief that I had been removed from a hostile world to a place where there was warmth, a bed, and moderately friendly people. Then I was given sherry, insulin and shock treatment which seemed so irrelevant. The whole point was that I was very unhappy and why couldn't they talk to me about that. It became a kind of fight again, but I couldn't get out because I had signed myself in and there was no-one to sign me out.

Eventually I left hospital and travelled for a while, ending up in Newcastle where I worked for a Dip. Ed. and broke down completely. Then I met a girl called Annabel Broome who was doing M. Sc. on Anorexia Nervosa. For the first time in my life somebody talked to me objectively and dispassionately as an equal and told me that I had Anorexia. The word had never been used to me before. It helped enormously to see anorexia as an illness with certain symptoms and to understand that all the guilt feelings I had were just part of anorexia. Moreover, talking to Annabel made me feel for the first time that I could contribute something by my experience.

I started to be objective about my state, and to consciously look after myself. I began by eating baby food to break away from the rigid diet I had been living on for fourteen years – one and a half biscuits and some cheese twice a day. Gradually I began to experience feelings of hunger and tried to make myself eat when I felt hungry. Although eating is still a rational rather than instinctive act for me. I began to grow which was very very frightening – I mean growing taller at 26.

Then I did some teaching and enjoyed it. During teaching there is just you and the children with none of the pressures and competition of relating to people of your own age group. I was at peace for the first time.

Anorexia nervosa is a living death

I was a plump, extrovert child and a fat, docile adolescent. I had always accepted the traditional values impressed upon me during my very normal upbringing. Boarding school had instilled certain rules which I thought immutable. The doors, windows and walls were being neatly built. Soon I would be contentedly encapsulated in the semi-detached semi-detachment in which most people are blindly happy to live, safe amid the accepted attitudes, prejudices and limitations imposed by my particular social environment.

I lost my surplus fat; went to University; got a degree, got married, got a job. It was as uneventful, as predictable and suburban as could be. I can't say exactly when, or why, things changed. But suddenly, these rigid rules which had governed my life and blinkered my vision lost their validity. I had never really been allowed to grow into full adult identity, and now the growth was too sudden and threatened to ▶

She really cannot see how thin she is

disturb the established tenor of my ways. So I starved physically the shoots of spiritual growth, refusing to nourish this wayward plant which threatened to grow too abundantly for the circumscribed garden of convention. I gradually ate less and less.

The first time I missed a period I thought I was pregnant. The doctor disillusioned me, happening to remark that I was rather slim. I didn't believe him, because all my life I had been, and thought of myself as, fat - as I still did, even at the lowest level of anorexic starvation. Gynaecological checks revealed no abnormality. I continued and intensified my campaign of self-starvation.

As my weight dropped dramatically, I became more lethargic and non-communicative. I couldn't be bothered to talk much or walk far. I would plan even a journey from one room to another to economise on what little energy I had. At the same time, I was houseproud to the point of obsession. Around the chaos in my mind, I had to build up a secure ritual of external order. I couldn't bear visitors. I told myself it was because they'd make a mess in the flat, refusing to admit my real fear: of allowing other people to be themselves, and to impinge their identities on my hollow non-self, because then I would have to give, and live; something for which I lacked the mental and physical resources.

My husband and my mother must have suffered agonies as they watched this deterioration. My mother has said to me: 'I couldn't understand it... you were so normal, you didn't seem to have any hang-ups'. No doubt RD Laing would find this comment illuminating, as one of his tenets is that often the child who does all that is expected of a good, biddable member of society (could this apply even more constrictingly to a good, biddable female member of society?) becomes the mentally ill adult.

I had heard of and read about anorexia but I thought it was only for adolescents. I was about 24. So when I finally agreed to see a psychiatrist I was unprepared for his diagnosis, for my immediate admission to a mental hospital (part of a large teaching hospital) but even more unprepared for the treatment that awaited me there.

I had one longish personal interview with a doctor on admission, and then - neatly categorised 'another anorexia' - I was once referred to in those terms at a gathering of the hospital staff - I was given huge doses of largactil, a strong tranquilliser which reduced me to a dozy, anti-social vegetable. I was also given ECT, which ravaged my memory and stunned my senses; put to bed and fattened on regular Complian, cornflakes and carbohydrate. I was like a goose being primed for pate de foie gras. Physically, I expanded. Mentally, I contracted, subdued into submission, battered into gratitude for this superficial 'cure'.

I came out two stone heavier, hating every curve and contour. What I really hated was the long build-up of poison and rebellion over the years, starved of an outlet as I had obediently allowed my inherent identity to be moulded into an alien ego.

I still attended the hospital for a weekly weight check, and I was so frightened by their threats of hauling me back in if I lost half a pound, that I continued to stuff food into my unwilling mouth. But I stopped the largactil, much to their ill-concealed fury.

And as soon as they discharged me, I stopped eating too. From time to time their threats continued to haunt me; I was terrified they might summon me for another check-up, and could hardly bear to go past the place in the car. As the pounds again fell away, I again fell into depression, lethargy and obsession.

The final downward phase was ironic beyond belief. Almost imperceptibly, my body began to swell, from the ankles upwards, until all the tissues were distorted and misshapen. The more I weighed, the more I starved myself, because I mistook this monstrosity for 'getting fat'. When I was admitted to another teaching hospital general ward this time nobody could establish its exact cause. Malnutrition alone was not an adequate explanation. It was yet another manifestation of the power of the mind - self-hatred swollen into its grossest form.

Through psychotherapy, which took the time and trouble to talk out my fears and frustrations, and by sparing use of an anti-depressant, which released the fluid from my body as it released the tensions in my mind, I was gradually helped to a process of self-healing, which is continuing still.

Blame is irrelevant during treatment, because causes are so complex, so inextricably interwoven in heredity, environment and personality. But I have learnt lessons, both bitter and beneficial. When I think of that mental hospital and how I and the other patients



were pushed so readily into the dependent 'patient' role - to be dazed and dosed and made allowances for until we had not more spirit and no more will or capacity to help ourselves - and contrast this with the illuminating release of psychotherapy, which aims not to subdue the symptoms but to clear out and exorcise the causes - I despair of our standards and criteria of mental treatment, because it is the few who are lucky enough to escape the status quo. Did those others escape?

Anorexia nervosa is the most stringent denial of self, expressed in the most stringent self-denial. The death of self, immured and isolated inside an impenetrable glass capsule. Safe from feeling, safe from life. Exerting rigid control over other people, their relationships with and attitudes towards you. Terrified lest any invasion of food, or emotion, or person should shatter the tomb, and expose you to life.

Anorexia nervosa is a complete confusion of roles, resulting in emptiness at the core of being. It's like a company of actors, each depicting a different impression of the same non-character.

Anorexia nervosa is suppression of life, by obsessive starvation, sometimes to the extent of suicide. Balanced, ironically, by an obsessive craving for life: agonising physical hunger and mental torture.

The overwhelming lesson, however, is the paramount importance of self-awareness and self-discovery through self-induced effort. The irony of anorexia lies in its misplaced motivation. While its aim is positive: to gain respect and attention from oneself and from others, to manipulate oneself and others into a defensive framework of prescribed action and reaction, its effect is negative, because it destroys respect and relationships as surely as it destroys the body.

There can be no liberation, no love, no creativity and no life, unless and until one can feel a valid and valuable member of human society. Physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually, I do not exist until I can identify, and accept, myself. ●

episode of an angry mother

I have shouted at them five times today

and each time felt worse afterwards
and each time known I could not contain
my passion within me

because I am a mother
why should I be my own yarder?

because I am responsible
why must I observe my nightly curfew?

I do not enjoy myself

even when I go out I
think of the clock, the baby-sitter
the cost
the breakfast
the knowledge that I will be shouted
awake by fights of happy noises
of loud playing

they are beautiful and I love them

my day has iron brackets round four
o'clock, my evenings barely exist
I need my tele, my knitting, my books,
my work,

but I need people too, I need the
freedom not to be responsible for a
short time

I do not enjoy myself
I am not very nice

I have little patience with other people
they are all children
who demand or contradict
and I am tired of being a mother

your eyes are
puzzled, you think, what a difficult
person, so tense, so over intense about
her reactions, what a difficult person

and you draw back because I am slightly
too shrill, too breathless, as though I
have no time or calm

I have no time or calm; I have to get back,
my baby-sitter is taking O-levels, I
have not time to sit over a drink or have the
luxury of missing the last tube home

No

I don't want it instead

but goddam you, you who proclaim
your irresponsibility for other people
while campaigning for ultimate
responsibility of all of us for each other

I make you feel guilty?
you make me feel inadequate,
'just' a housewife

hug your freedom tighter, girlie,
because when you have your babies
I won't be there

I may be so bitter
so twisted, so nasty, so
unsociable that I may even
rub my bitten claws together
at your horrified imprisonment

and if you have no kids? well, as
you grow older, in whatever freedom,
I will gloat to myself what you have missed,
that I have learned
even as I fight against it
the meaning of continuing responsibility

even if at the expense of something
I used to call my self

so if we're still playing the old games,
I'm okay, jill, I pull rank -
to myself as well as to you

I am still a mother and you are not and
I won't let you forget it

bitter?

well, you stick your tongue out at the
wind of history
and see what tastes get
deposited there

Micheline Wandor





Amrit Wilson's talk on race relations at a police station provoked such extraordinary reactions, and said so much about police attitudes to both immigrants and women that Amrit became curious to hear policewomen's feelings about working in the force.

'The qualities valued most in the police force are uprightness, masculinity and respectability.' This was said at a police internal seminar I attended last year. The seminar was on race relations and like other police seminars its purpose was to educate the police. I was present as an observer. The lecturer was a black community worker. About 40 policemen and no policewomen were present, they were extremely hostile to the speaker. After an hour we broke up for coffee.

I went with the speaker and the policeman organising the seminar to what appeared to be a special part of the general canteen. As we sat drinking our coffee I became aware of an uneasy feeling, looking round I found a group of policemen leaning and half-climbing over a bar in the general canteen to have a good look at me. Their expressions were not just lewd but astonished. A woman! A black woman! In their canteen! Later, I learnt that the canteen is regarded by many policemen as the heart of

police society and such an intrusion was shocking.

When I described this incident to women who are conscious of the sexual aspects of women's liberation, they asked me, 'How did you feel? Weren't you affected? Wasn't it unbearable?' I must confess that I was not much affected, just amazed that these upholders of British society should behave so childishly. It was also the first indication to me of the police group attitude to women. But I

was not sensitive enough to realise its full implications. That is why, when several months later, I was asked to be a speaker at another police seminar, I was again surprised at the way the policemen responded to me and to what I said.

I had been asked to speak on 'Indian culture'. I had modified the subject, intending to discuss just those aspects of the Indian way of life which may be useful to a policeman in an area with a high Indian population. Since Indians are frequently accused of primitive marriage customs and a highly male-dominated society, I felt it would be interesting to discuss this. I stressed that repression is usually a question of degree and one way of understanding sex roles in a traditional Indian marriage is to look at the sex roles in a traditional British marriage; and again that Indian arranged marriages are only one type of the marriages advertised, say in the *London Weekly Advertiser*. In both cases, selection is based on the values of a materialistic and male-dominated society – such as the income of the man versus the appearance and family background of the woman. Innocuous stuff, I thought, not much to argue about in that. But I was wrong. The words 'male domination' seemed to provoke them into a fury. And then, even to suggest that British males dominated! One policeman said, "I'm not going to sit here listening to this", and tried to walk out but was stopped by a senior officer. Others shouted, 'Rubbish.' This led to a strange interchange (a male-dominated society has its gallant knights.) Some policemen felt it was wrong to talk to a 'lady' like this and told their friends as much as the tops of their voices. A big, hearty, red-faced man said, 'No similarity at all between your lot and ours. Why, those people in the *London Weekly Advertiser*, they're just too busy to do their own courting, that's all.' Another said, 'Let me make you laugh, the other day I was phoning my guvnor and his wife answered the phone. I said, "Can I speak to the guvnor Missus?" And she say, "You are speaking to guvnor, I'm the guvnor." Of course, that is a joke, because it is accepted that, in every marriage, there has to be a guvnor and a woman can never be one.'

The seminar, and the reactions of the men forced me to think about the police attitude to women. So far, I had been interested mainly in racism, that, of course, overshadows everything else for a black man or woman dealing with the police. But now I had come upon this new aspect of their behaviour as a group. A lot of comments made by policemen to me took on a new meaning. Of course, as a black woman you are likely to be at the bottom of the racist scale of sexual values. But still the implication always was that a man must defend this woman, even if it is in the crudest possible way, because a woman is one of his important possessions. I remembered the following conversation I had had with a constable: PC: It doesn't worry me a bit your people calling me pig or trash. Why should you care if I call you a coon?

Me: What if your wife was called trash?

PC: What, by a coloured? I'd smash his face in.

Me: What should my husband do if someone called me coon or spade?

PC: He should smash the bloke's face in.

And get charged with assaulting the police perhaps? Revenge, that is the answer, and that is not Victorian morality but the reaction of an ordinary, probably quite moderate, constable.

If you live in a nice area he may be the bobby who drinks at your local and helps old ladies across the road. If you are black, he may be one of those people who did this.

Upstairs Mrs. Simpson was in bed dozing, her daughters were sitting in her room, when a man and a woman burst in (Inspector Peters and W.P.C. Johannson). The woman said, "You are under arrest". Mrs. Simpson stretched out to pick up the phone, at the same time trying to put her dressing gown on, she rang her friend and begged her to come over saying there are two people in her room who said they are arresting her. As she was talking, Peters grabbed the telephone from her, cut the cord, and hit her across the face. She fell to the ground and was kicked by W.P.C. Johannson. Mrs. Simpson started to scream. Peters then put a lock around her neck. (Race Today, June '74)

If you are in the women's movement, he may be one of the policemen who did this.

Forty people went to Mothercare. The place was invaded by twenty policemen and five policewomen. Terrific scuffles ensued – several people were injured including one of the town probation officers, Nigel Todd, who was kicked several times by a policeman. One woman who was there with her baby was forcibly restrained while another officer threw her pram plus baby out of the shop. (Spare Rib)

After all, policemen are frequently transferred from district to district.

Police attitudes being what they are, what can life be for women within the force. I asked two policewomen who had been at the seminar if they would talk to me about their jobs. They were both women in their early forties. They were married and their husbands were policemen. When I spoke to them, they were extremely friendly and informal.

When I described the bar incident at the first seminar they said the policewomen would probably clamber over a bar to look at a man from outside if he was reasonably attractive, because 'In the police station we are not inhibited.'

However, this did not mean they were relaxed. In fact, the tensions on policewomen were very high. This sometimes showed itself towards the end of their working life. 'Female colleagues who leave and get married often lose their first child. Men, perhaps, can cope better.'

For a woman, tension starts way back at the training school. The trainee has to model, not just her behaviour, but her feelings, on those of a policeman. They are singled out by instructors, 'If you've made the slightest error, say in the way you wear your uniform, they lay into you verbally to make you break down. If you do this too often, you are sacked.' When demonstrations are staged for the class, the demonstrator acts the part of the criminal and any student may be called upon to deal with the situation just after the crime. If it is a sexual offence, a woman student is always chosen to deal with it. The idea is to toughen them up but the way it is done is almost sadistic. 'Girls who look sensitive are particularly picked on. I remember one who was very tall and thin and

sensitive looking. She was from a convent. She was always being picked on. Being good looking is a disadvantage. If you're a dolly-bird type, they treat the whole thing as a bit of a giggle. For example, at a first aid lesson, the instructor (a policeman) said about a blonde girl, "There I was, expected to teach first-aid and I had this – thing – right in front of me."

After training school, the women were until recently channelled into women's and children's work. A junior and senior course prepared them for work related to the Children and Young Persons Act for the protection of children. This meant that they were trained to go into houses for care cases for the protection rather than prosecution of young people. They felt this training gave them a more sympathetic approach than their male colleagues. All policewomen were in a special branch for women with their own commander and their work was entirely connected with women and children. But this February, 'After a great deal of investigation it was decided that we should be integrated with the men.' They were sceptical about how well this would work in practice. Advertisements for jobs no longer mention sex, but the number of women in high ranks has hardly changed. What they feared was that their 'expertise in the field of women and children will not be used. Though policemen turn to us if in trouble over particular cases.'

What was the attitude of their male colleagues? 'Well, it is one of acceptance on the basis that we're of a lower strata. The younger generation who have working wives are better. But a few of the older ones won't accept women, won't work with women or take them in a car.'

Women had to prove themselves again and again but were usually accepted in the end. In general, they thought, policemen were 'real gentlemen'. One of them said, 'They may say to me, shut your face Jones, but but when you go out with them on the job they always walk on the outside of the footpath and open doors for you. They treat their wives rather roughly though, and the wives sometimes get jealous.'

Their own husbands were 'very understanding.' 'Mine washes his own shirts and everything', said one. The other said, 'My husband helps me a lot, but he wouldn't like me to tell anybody that. Men don't like it discussed outside that they help around the house. It does something to male ego.'

Of course, a policeman's male ego is unusually well developed. What then, were their attitudes to women's liberation. One said, in a friendly way, 'I agree with it in principle'. The other said, 'As far as I'm concerned, they can do their thing and I'll do mine.' ●

To become a policewoman you have to be over five feet four inches and a 'reasonable' height to weight ratio, and you need four 'O' Levels including Maths and English or you can take an entrance exam. Starting salary is £1,632 p.a. with free accommodation for men and women. Scotland Yard says that women's opportunities for promotion are greater than men's because in London there is one commander for six hundred policewomen and thirty six commanders for twenty one thousand policemen.

Somewhere to go to get away from the Beat the wife game

Some time ago, a group of women in Australia read about Chiswick Women's Aid in Spare Rib, the shelter for women needing refuge from different kinds of violence, mainly domestic violence.

'As the Spare Rib article pointed out, the plight of women at the centre seems like the stuff Penny Dreadfuls are made of. Yet anyone living in a high density population area (or anywhere for that matter) must be aware of the violence directed against women and children.

It is a problem of enormous proportions, and a problem which is virtually ignored by the government and the community. I lived next to a family where day in and day out Beat the Wife was the favourite game, and the next favourite game was Beat the Baby, but please dear, only with newspaper not on the head. The only satisfaction I ever got from that family was that the third favourite game was Beat the Husband (she was a very spunky woman), and then all three would get carted off to hospital.'

The women talked with social workers in Sydney who confirmed that there was an

urgent need for an emergency shelter. One welfare officer told them how she would weep with frustration at the end of a week of having to tell a dozen or so women that they would have to return to violent or alcoholic husbands because there was simply no alternative accommodation available. In Sydney there were 7 hostels providing emergency accommodation for 1,379 men. There were 4 similar hostels providing accommodation for approximately 73 women and 75 children.

So, the group of women set about finding a large house which would be either rent free or at a pepper corn rental. No success.

'The attempt to gain possession of a Commonwealth Hostel at Burwood, Sydney, is worth telling for the record. The hostel is empty, and would accommodate 120 people. An approach was made to the appropriate

Minister, Mr Daly, for the use of the hostel. Margaret Whitlam was informed of the request and asked if she could help as a member of the Board of Commonwealth Hostels Limited. She replied that she approved of the plan (in fact, complimented the group on their interest in the problem) but she felt that as one member of the Board she could not influence a decision. The Department was unaware, also, that the hostel was vacant... six weeks later'... I'm sorry to have to tell you that it will not be possible to assist you in your very worthwhile undertaking by making the property available to your organisation'. Burwood Municipal Council want it for a park. At least Burwood battered wives will have fresh air and trees. Burwood has few community facilities, and a local women's group which has been trying to lobby the council to establish a childcare centre has been denied so much as an interview'.

Mr Daly's rejection of the group's request arrived during the International Women's Day activities in Sydney, which had included a forum on women and violence. A member of the women's shelter group told the forum of her group's lack of success in finding a building, despite trying all the 'proper' channels. With government approval,



Photo Marilyn McIntyre

might seem a little thing, but I found it important. And the symbolic gesture of painting in large letters across the front of the house WOMEN'S REFUGE was exhilarating too. The house next door was empty ... so down came the dividing fence, and cleaning up operations on two four-roomed houses began. There is now a terrific backyard for kids to play in

During that day 50 women came to help get the house ready. Posters were pinned up on the walls, flowers and curtains appeared, floor coverings were put down. The residents of Westmoreland Street demonstrated their reaction by bringing down bundles of bedding and household utensils. Another woman from the next street took a few of the group on tour of other empty houses in the area. They came back with a kitchen table, a bed, a chest of drawers, and a kitchen sink. The young girls who had been clustering curiously at the gate overcame their shyness, came inside and began to paint the front door. They volunteered to be on roster duty.

'By nightfall the house was comfortable, a shelter, a reality. No one questioned the legality of the day's actions. The houses belong to the Church of England, and are in the process of being sold to the Federal Government in Australia. Which group will take action to evict homeless and destitute women? Meanwhile, the refuge is there, and it is open and staffed 24 hours a day by volunteer women who will give advice and support to any woman who comes there'.

There have been a number of precedents of Australian women setting up shelters or hostels for other women. In 1933 a group of Labour Party women who were distressed at the number of women sleeping in doorways during the Depression decided to start a shelter. They approached the Premier, J.T. Lang, who sent them to the Repossessed Buildings Commission. The women were given the use of a building in the centre of Sydney and they ran that as a hostel for 40 women for 8 years without any further government assistance. One hundred years before that, in the early days of Sydney's settlement, a woman called Caroline Chisholm obtained the use of a former immigrants' barracks to house homeless women - women who'd been sent out to provide partners for convicts.

Information sent by Anne Summers, Sydney, and quotes from *The Digger* newspaper, PO Box 77, Carlton, Victoria 3053, Australia.

destitute women could sleep in parks, or stay home and get beaten. The group decided to take direct action. There were empty houses in Glebe, Sydney, and they intended to squat in one and open it up as a refuge.

'On the next Saturday morning, at 10 am in the backyard of 'Elsie', No.73 Westmoreland Street, Glebe, a group of women found what a liberating experience breaking and entering can be. Within half an hour all barricades and nails were removed, new locks installed, the water turned on - it was all so easy and it was all done without the aid of men. The latter

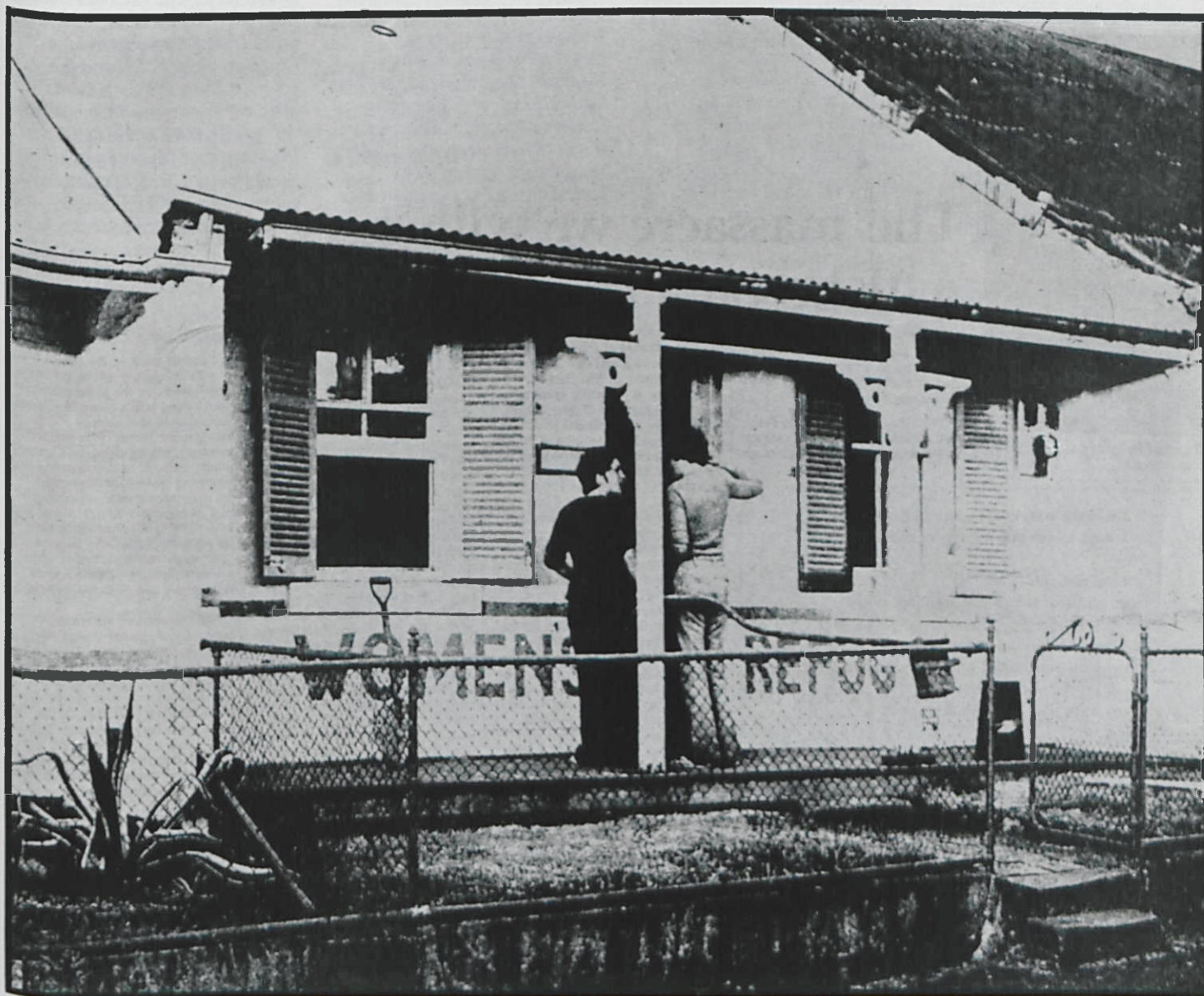


Photo Dany Humphreys

Info...Odds & Sods...A

Mortgages

Can you advise me where I can get some information about building society lending facilities for women. Do you know of societies which are sympathetic to single women investors and borrowers? Many years ago when I was trying to get a mortgage with my husband I found many societies unfavourably disposed to even a joint mortgage, let alone a mortgage for a single woman, which I am now. I would be grateful for any advice, books to read or otherwise.

Yours sincerely, Sylvia J. Wright
London, SW17.

* Have you looked at the section on mortgages in *Women's Rights - A Practical Guide* by Anna Coote and Tess Gill, published by Penguin? It names the building societies which do not have a favourable attitude to women, but unfortunately does not mention those which do. It also mentions a *Money* Which report on mortgages, December 1971, which states that all the building societies in their survey claim that they treat single women in a steady job on the same basis as men. However, they are likely to be more helpful if she is a professional woman over 30. I have heard that the Halifax Building Society and the organisation Shelter are both very sympathetic to women, but this is only hearsay. Try also contacting Sally Hesmondhalgh 228-5278 who has information on mortgages for women.

Self Help

First of all thank you for some of the down to earth information you provide. Some months ago I read an article about medical 'Self-Help' which was underway in America and was about to be introduced to women in this country. At that time I was working in Chester and did not request details of possible lectures etc. Is there any kind of centre or person I could contact in London for guidance in self examination and menstrual extraction, or has the law made this impossible for the time being?

Best wishes, Frances Viner, NW1.

* Yes, you are right, menstrual extraction is still in an experimental state in this country and as yet illegal. There are several centres where 'Self-Help' groups have formed and the nearest one for you to contact would be Kingsgate Women's Centre, 1 Kingsgate Place, NW6. 624-1952, whose self-help clinic takes place on Wednesday evenings at 8pm.

Women's Meeting Places

Please could you let me know of any clubs, eating places, pubs, etc., in London which are for women only.

Thanking you in advance,
Jill R. Blackman, London, SW4.
* I'm afraid there's not an awful lot of choice. There is the *Crown and Woolpack* a pub at the Angel, Islington which holds a women's disco in an upstairs room every Saturday night. It is in St. John's Street and is the first pub on the left past the Angel Tube. There is also *The Gateways* which is a Lesbian club in Bramerton Street, off the King's Road, and is open every night of the week. For further information on specifically gay places you could buy a copy of "Gay Girls Guide" which is a universal list of gay places, published in San Francisco and obtainable at Compendium Bookshop, 240 Camden High Street, London, NW1. Do readers know of any other such places?

Women's Condition and History

I'm French. I need to tell you the help you are bringing me to express things I feel and cannot explain conveniently sometimes and to develop a knowledge of women's condition and history.

Do you see any possibility of entering classes on women's condition/history and could you also give me the address of my nearest women's centre. I am still so confused in my mind;

Catherine Veyriere, NW11.

* There is a course on Women's Liberation beginning at the Addison Institute in September. The course will be held one evening a week for a term and will cover all aspects of women's oppression. If you are interested in further details contact the Addison Institute, Addison Gardens, London, W14. 603-5333, for a prospectus. The Kingsgate Women's Centre, 1 Kingsgate Place, London NW6, has open meeting on the first Monday of the month for new women. As for reading matter, here are some suggestions of things I have mentioned before on this page: the pamphlet *An Introduction to the Women's Liberation Workshop*, obtainable from 38 Earlham Street, London, WC2, *The Body Politic: Women's Liberation in Britain 1969-1972*, obtainable from Stage 1, Theobalds Road, London, WC1. Also the excellent book *Our Bodies Ourselves*, put together by the Boston Women's Health Collective and obtainable from Compendium Bookshop, 240 Camden High Street, London, NW1.

Isolation

I read Alison Machin's article (S.R. No. 23) several times and would certainly be eager to accept the suggestion in her last paragraph of an opportunity to discuss sexuality with others. With a full time job and living in a rather isolated place I feel desperately cut off from anyone with whom I can share ideas. I think the nearest women's group is about 70 miles round trip away. I have approached women living in the area but with little result - I feel so isolated, so tired of being the only one who is offended by so many little petty and important things (must all the letters, even bills, be addressed to Mr.?)

At least Spare Rib is some kind of life line. Perhaps I am not the only crazy woman in the country! But even so, many of the articles are written by women living in London, whose lifestyle seems so remote from that of thousands of women such as myself. Doubtless our outwardly "middleclass" way of life receives little sympathy (as it does from myself) but for those, especially not living in big cities - it results in an even more desperate isolation. If Alison Machin's suggestion does result in a group I may be able to get to London a few times. If you know of any other women who would welcome the opportunity to correspond and occasionally meet I would be very glad to hear.

Margaret Edwards, Peterborough.
PS: If relevant, I'm 29 years, married, studied sociology at Sheffield University, have a full time job, no children. I live in a small village and am regarded as a general oddity by those around.
* If anyone would like to get in touch with Margaret as she suggests, would they please write care of Spare Rib.

Adventure Playgrounds

I am living and working on an Adventure Playground in Whitechapel, an area where I feel sexist views are more firmly entrenched than most. I am finding it increasingly difficult to work here as a woman, the problems seem insurmountable and at times I become very despondant. I feel perhaps it would be helpful to live in a collective/commune, but as I recently moved to London I have few contacts. I would be very grateful if anyone could help in any way. I would be prepared to help with children, particularly during term time and live in S.E. London, but can't afford much rent.

Love, Liz Allen, London, E.1.

DHSS Query

I refer to the article on Social Security by Phillipa Steele in Issue No. 23. In the first column of page 35 under the heading National Insurance Benefits, the article states, "However, a single woman, widow or a separated * or divorced wife can claim, etc." I cannot find any footnote to follow the asterisk and am wondering (a) if it has been omitted or (b) if the note is incorporated later on in the article without being marked by an asterisk. Perhaps you could clear this matter up.

I am anxious to know what attitude the DHSS adopts to a woman who has left her husband and, for various reasons, finds it impossible to support herself and has to claim for Supplementary Benefit.

Sincerely yours,
H. Stratton,
Worcester.

* I am afraid it is impossible to give a specific answer to your query about supplementary benefit as the attitude of the DHSS varies with each individual case. Why don't you ring the general enquiries section of the DHSS on 01-407 5522 and put your specific problem to them. We have always found them to be very friendly and sympathetic. PS. Sorry about the asterisk. It should have been repeated in column 2 page 36 against the heading Unsupported Mothers.

Groups

A.L. Leavers,
18 Liverpool Road,
Kingston, Surrey.

Angela Craig,
30 Woodland Avenue,
Penryn,
Cornwall.

Liz Bennett, Ruth,
32 Hainthorpe Road,
West Norwood,
London SE27

Chrissy,
Hammersmith,
Baron's Court,
West Kensington,
Fulham.

June Baker,
Rochester,
Kent.

In the future if you want to contact other readers about forming groups etc. through the magazine, please could you use the classified section. The charge of 5p per word helps towards paying the typesetting cost.

NEWS

CHILDMINDING: *The local press say it's a national problem; the national press say it's a local problem.*

"So long as child minding is seen simply as a semi-legal and nasty side of child care the community will get the child minders it deserves - sometimes semi-legal and nasty", says a report put out earlier this year by the Sutton District of the Child Minders Action Movement.

"Although the current child minding scene is full of problems, child minding itself is not a problem. It is a key form of community care, a potential valuable experience of growth and development for children in a home rather than an institutional setting", the report continues.

The action movement - a voluntary organisation made up of registered minders, working mothers and other interested people - was formed in June 1971. "It was a moment of frustration, of parents trying to put one on me, in terms of holiday pay and so on", said Monica Artiss, a founder member and now branch secretary of the Sutton Child Minders branch of NUPE.

"I just got damned annoyed about the whole thing and thought to myself, 'Hell, this can't be'. I'd had other problems of a kid sitting under a table, and I wasn't able to communicate with him. I contacted the Social Services department, but there was no help available. So I thought 'Right, I'm going to get a list of minders'. I went foot-slogging, bashing on their doors and saying 'Now, can you give me some advice?' Only to discover that we were all in the same situation."

A group formed to hold meetings and discuss shared problems, to break down the isolation that most minders experience. These early meetings were relatively unsuccessful, however, because of tensions and disagreements between parents and minders. It was hard to

agree on a definition of abnormal behaviour in a child, or a reasonable weekly fee, or who would pay for sweets, toys, travelling expenses for outings, and so on. Parents also felt that the minding service should be for charitable reasons and not for financial gain.

The minders at that first meeting decided to meet on their own after that. For two years "therapeutic group meetings" were held in the minders' homes. By summer 1973 most minders felt that they couldn't progress further in the group, so there is now a telephone service for minders who want to discuss their problems individually.

But the action movement does not

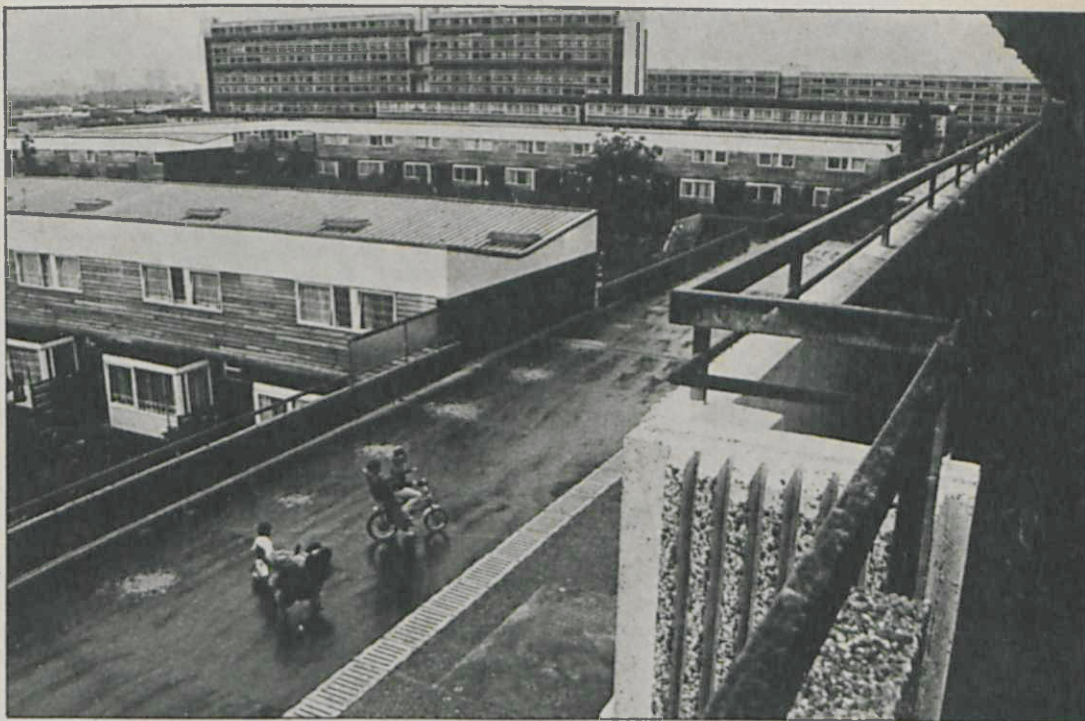
want individual solutions. "We intend to show that because of the loopholes in the law, and the inadequate supervision or involvement of existing minders, there is little or no difference between the registered and the illegal child minders, and that a considerable number of children are in emotional and physical danger", says their report.

The Nursery and Child Minders Regulation Act 1948 (amended 1968), according to which child minding is a private arrangement, aims to eliminate child farming, cruelty and poverty by registration of all minders with their local authority Social Services department, "if they look after

pre-school age children for two hours or more for reward in their own homes". Local authorities have discretionary powers to lay down requirements in terms of premises (e.g. 25 square feet/child), allocation of numbers, visits by social workers, and so on.

Minders experience repeated frustration with the local authority. Monica described the case of a depressive mother, one of whose children was already in care. The local authority passed her other two children on to a minder, but no fee was forthcoming. The action movement helped out with money that week. But problems are never just financial.

"These children were so unusual



There are 1800 homes on Roundshaw estate, Sutton. Rents are £12.70 for a maisonette and £14 for a three-bedroomed flat. About 40 out of a total of 180 minders in the borough live on the estate, which has been open for 6 years.

"There's a community centre and a youth centre. We've fought for a health centre which is only just opening this week and for our own bus service. We're all placid but we've become militant through force of circumstance."

Angela Phillips

in their behaviour that the minder couldn't cope: chewing blankets and screaming in the night. You accept it from little babies, you don't accept it from a 3-year old and a 6-year old. Nobody had told her what the problem was. She didn't know whether they were naughty children, or disturbed children. We phoned the local authority and said don't you think you ought to tell this minder some of the problems in the family, and perhaps she can help these children. 'Oh, no, no, no. We can't divulge information like that.' It very much reminds me of the patient being treated before they've diagnosed the illness."

The Sutton group is thus critical of the implicitly divisive emphasis on illegal minding in Brian Jackson's government-sponsored research unit in Cambridge, which recently announced a 'First Major Grant for Imaginative Work with Illegal Child Minders'. The £12,000 given to the unit by a business foundation is going to illegal minders, to encourage them to register. "They're going to pay them £10 per week, plus they're distributing toys by the tea-chest, inflatable swimming pools, swings, and so on", Monica said.

"I think that when people think of child minding, they think of illegal ones. Do you think that us registered minders have got the toys and that we earn the money? Do you realise that we're working for as little as 3p an hour?"

"I'm not too keen on what Brian Jackson's doing. I've contacted minders all over London and they're hopping mad. In his report he talks about 'poor working class mothers'. But this is not just a working class problem. You can say it becomes a middle class problem. We went to that meeting at the National Institute of Social Workers - there must have been 80 or 90 social workers there - and we got up and said our part. Now they've conjured up an idea that child minders are ignorant, they've got no education so they can't really take a job outside the home. And we were immediately battered at: 'Well, of course you're a middle class group'. Nobody could be more working class than me. I'm a child minder, my husband works on a stall in the market and we live in a council house. And they would not have it. I was very tempted to scream, when one social worker said about child minders not being able to write their own name, 'Well, why don't you set up a dyslexia group, and help them.'"

"Another thing that annoys me: we have been trying desperately to put our viewpoint over for 3 years. We've been completely ignored. The local press say it's a national problem, the

national press say it's a local problem. I met Robert Carr, who is M.P. for Sutton, and put forward our proposals. And do you know what he said to me? 'I don't think women should go out to work.'

"When it comes down to rock bottom, we were asking for help. I've had letters from Social Services departments all over the country, asking for our advice. We've got the experience, and nobody will help us. They just don't realise how we've coped. To bring minders out of their isolation, we needed money. We hadn't got two halfpennies to rub together. And this is no lie: every time we wanted to send out a survey or write letters, outside my front door we used to hold a jumble sale."

In January of this year the group sent out 170 questionnaires in Sutton to assess the needs of child minders. 63 came back, and from the answers it was possible to evolve a set of proposals. 95% of minders in this survey felt there should be national standard fee, with a subsidy for lower-income families to discourage the spread of illegal minding. Minders would be public employees, and parents would pay their fee directly to the local authority. As such, minders would benefit from union support in ensuring that minders, parents and children get a fair deal.

The survey also showed that 50% of minders do not know that subsidies are available to one-parent families, that 45% do not know they can claim free milk for each child under their care, that 45% do not carry with them information of where the parents work - and nor do their husbands, and that 50% cannot afford to buy the necessary toys for the children under their care.

Minders expressed a need for a compulsory basic training in child care. So the action movement negotiated with the principal of the Liberal Arts College and the director of Social Services in Sutton. A child minders training course starts this September covering human development, role of play, first aid, structure of local authority departments, diet, hygiene, and history of minding. Since some minders will have difficulty with time and travelling distance, the group has asked for transport to be made available to commute them to and fro.

"What we've got to remember is lots of our minders have had no further education since the time they left school, and it could possibly be hard", Monica said. "Before we decided to do this I thought if I can do it, I'm sure they can, but the only way I could prove that I could do it was by taking a course in adult education myself. I decided to go in for an O Level - my very first - in Family and Community Studies."

The action movement also applied to join the National Union of Public Employees. "We had to have some form of strong body behind us. When you're broke and you're struggling on, you can't get a great deal done. It didn't carry any weight. We were just 'childminders'. Brian Jackson is an official. He's a professional person. So I thought the only thing we could do is approach a body like NUPE. Mind you, I had heard that Sweden had done this. They've now got 8000 members in their union, and they are employed by their councils."

Now known as the Sutton Child Minders Branch, the group formulated seven demands which they sent to the NUPE executive:

- 1) Employment of minders by authorities.
- 2) Minders to be vetted before getting a registration certificate.
- 3) Certificate stating child is mentally and physically fit.
- 4) The local Social Services department to keep a register of all the children in the care of minders,

so that if a child becomes emotionally disturbed by being moved around between minders, the authority will be able to advise the parents.

5) Parents and minder to be given a list of minders' duties, for guidance.

6) Compulsory training for minders.

7) The authority to keep a record of the child's parents.

"At the present moment we're sending union leaflets out to all the 32 boroughs in London", Monica said. "But we haven't completely lost our identity as an action movement and I think there is still a need to continue on our kind of research under a separate body."

"I could quite easily give up childminding now they've made me branch secretary in NUPE. But I feel that once you've given it up, you've grown away from the child minders themselves. I want to continue being a childminder, and I'm going to be one of them, come what may."

Ann Scott



Angela Phillips

Monica Artiss was brought up in Westminster, left school at 15 and worked as a wages clerk. "I went and got myself married, and decided to work on the market, on a stall selling salads." They came to Roundshaw to get out a bit further, and so that the kids could have a garden.

"My son wasn't very forward with his development, and I felt if he mixed with other children, he would progress. So that's how I started up. And I found an awful lot of fault in the childminding world."

"I've spoken to a social worker in Westminster, who said that child minders have all agreed to charge £6 per week. It's good that the minders are doing that, but they are inviting illegal ones. Now there's an awful lot of council property in Westminster: Lillington Street, Churchill Gardens - which hasn't got what you might call a nursery - and there's working mothers there. I was told there's 100 minders in that borough. I couldn't believe it. There must be illegal minding, and they said there's not. I mean, you could have 100 minders in Churchill Gardens alone."

UNEQUAL PAY

Although the Equal Pay Act has now been in existence for 4 years, there is still considerable confusion about its meaning and the impact it has had. Here some of the problems surrounding it are discussed, as well as the actual developments in women's pay generally that have occurred since 1970.

A recent report on women's pay (1) showed that for private industries and services as a whole, women's rates had risen, as a percentage of men's rates, from 80.5% in 1971 to 92% in 1974. Such figures appear to indicate considerable progress towards equality for women but they are misleading in several respects.

1. The rates referred to are the minimum negotiated rates for women relative to the minimum rates for men. These rates are chosen because one of the implications of the Equal Pay Act is that after 1975 all collective agreements must bring minimum female rates (if they are so designated) at least to the level of minimum male rates.

The figures quoted therefore give no indication of the relationship of women's to men's rates on average which is, in fact, considerably more unequal because a higher proportion of women will be on or close to minimum rates than will men.

2. Negotiated rates are not the same as earnings. It is to the former only that the Equal Pay Act relates and the above figures refer. If we look at earnings we get a very different picture of the relationship between women's pay and men's. According to the most recent figures available (2) there has been only a very slight rise in the ratio of women's to men's earnings and it remains at the very low level of roughly one half (see table). In addition the actual cash differential between men's and women's earnings has increased markedly. It is this differential and not just the relative differential which would have to start narrowing if women were ever going to start catching up.

What does 'equal pay' really mean in that case and why is there this large difference between earnings and rates?

The Equal Pay Act establishes the right of women from 29 December 1975 to the same rates of pay as men when they are engaged:

- a) on work of the same or broadly similar nature to that of men;
- b) on a job which, though different from those of men, has been given an equal value to men's jobs under a job evaluation scheme.

Therefore where women are working on different jobs from men, as is very generally the case, the law in itself does not prevent discrimination from continuing. This is for two reasons:

1. The law does not establish the right of women to equal pay for work of equal value, as was argued for by the TUC before the Act was passed, and which would establish the right of workers to evaluation of their work under a job evaluation scheme. Thus the impact of provision (b) above is dependent on voluntary extension of job evaluation. It is possible under the Act therefore for firms to circumvent equal pay by merely renaming grades without carrying out any relative evaluation of the different men's and women's jobs concerned.

Thus in 1971-72 the Yorkshire Wool Textiles industry abolished the words 'male' and 'female' in its grade headings. It instituted a 'unisex' Grade P containing the same workers as the previous women's Grade P, paying them £3 less than labourers in 'unisex' Grade A (previously male Grade A).

2. But even where job evaluation

schemes have been introduced there is no necessary elimination of discrimination. For these schemes, although appearing scientific, in fact depend on subjective evaluation of different job characteristics which always tend to reflect established differentials. Thus light work involving dexterity is normally evaluated at less than heavy work entailing equivalent skill, and women again lose out.

The question of whether or not women workers should press for job evaluation in the fight for equal pay has been a highly contested one. What is clear is that the extent to which women workers in different industries can benefit from the Act will depend on their level of organisation and ability to press for equal treatment vis and vis both management and male workers.

The relative earnings of men and women will therefore continue to differ as rates become equalised for the following reasons:

1. The Act, as explained above, establishes equal rates only for workers on the same jobs or the same grades. Equality of job opportunity and equality of family responsibilities would therefore be necessary if earnings were to be equalised.
2. Although discrimination in rates for overtime, shift premia or bonuses will be eliminated, these rates will go on pertaining more to men than to women.
3. Longer hours worked by men (46½ per week for manual men compared with 40 for women full-time workers in 1973) will continue to raise their relative earnings in manual work although the difference in hours is not an important factor in non-manual work.
4. The Act specifically excludes payment related to areas of 'family responsibility' including retirement, marriage and maternity/paternity.

Finally note that in addition to the limited nature of the rights established by the Equal Pay Act, employers will not be subject to punishment if found failing to comply with the Act, but merely to making back-dated pay to which

women are entitled. It is obvious that after 1975 there will still be many struggles ahead if women are to gain genuine economic equality.

Jean Gardiner

Footnotes

1. Incomes Data Study No. 79, July 1974: Women's Pay.
2. New Earnings Survey 1973 in Department of Employment Gazette, 1973 & 74.

Glossary

Wage Rates: Minimum rates of payment for different occupations are established by statutory means (eg Wages Councils) or through collective agreements between unions and employers either at national level or at local level, depending on the industry, and often on an annual basis. These rates may be supplemented by individual employers offering rates above the minimum.

Earnings: Are the actual payments workers receive, before tax and other deductions are made. These will often exceed rates on account of extra payments for overtime, shift-work, bonuses and piece work.

Job Evaluation: This technique assesses the value of a job, not to the employer, but in terms of the effort required of the worker. Jobs are broken down into a series of component characteristics such as responsibility, training, dexterity, physical strength, each of which is given a relative pseudo-scientific weighting on a points scale. In this way jobs are compared, each being worth so many points.

Jean went on holiday at the beginning of September so there's no Economics piece in Spare Rib 29. The next one will be on the economics of nationalisation, in issue 30.

Dear Spare Rib,
Your features on economics are great - keep it up. But the latest article on the Social Contract fails to bring out the fact that the Social Contract is based on the idea of a contract between Government and People, i.e. "them" - the Labour Government - and "us" - the working class - despite the fact that the Labour party came into being to represent the working class against Capital!
Best wishes,
Kathleen Quinn,
Oxford.

Average gross weekly earnings of full-time adult workers all industries and services, 1970 & 1973

	Manual £		Non-manual £	
	1970	1973	1970	1973
Women	13.4	19.7	17.8	24.7
Men	26.8	38.1	35.8	48.1
Money difference	13.4	18.4	18.0	23.4
	%		%	
Women's as % Men's	50.0	51.7	49.7	51.4

in theory

Home Secretary Roy Jenkins outlined the Labour government's proposals for sex discrimination legislation on July 23rd as a preliminary to a forthcoming White Paper. The Sex Discrimination Act Campaign, which responded by sending an open letter to Roy Jenkins explaining why "Labour's proposals represent a half-hearted compromise", looks here at sections from his statement and discusses its inadequacy.

"The Bill will apply to employment, education, housing, the provision of goods, facilities, and services to the public, and to related advertising.

It will be subject to some limited exceptions; such as for employment in private households, and, at least initially, for small firms, as well as for a few carefully defined instances where sex is a genuine occupational qualification for a particular job.

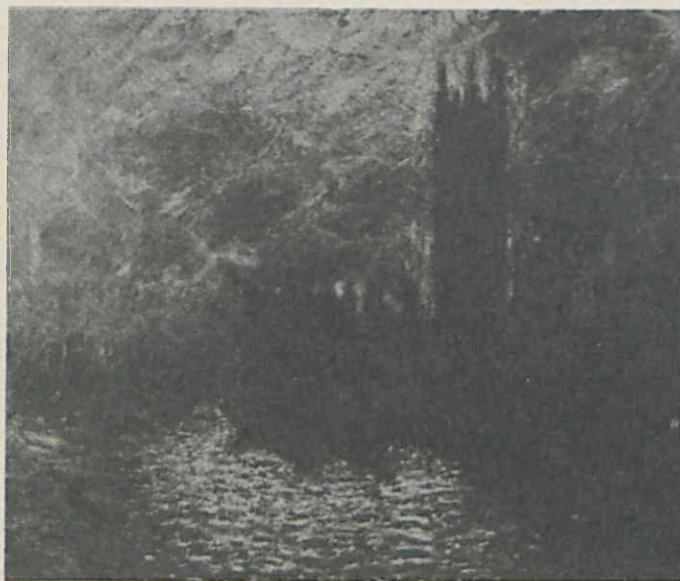
The Bill will apply to employment agencies and training organisations; employers' organisations, trade unions, professional associations, and bodies issuing licences connected with employment."

The more obvious and "easy to deal with" forms of discrimination e.g. in employment, mortgages and hire purchase, will be treated without attacking the cause. Labour can hardly claim to be making any serious attempt to change attitudes, if they ignore the more concrete form of those attitudes, which is that enshrined quite clearly in regulations treating women as dependants.

"The Bill will not cover fields dealt with in separate legislation, such as social security and pensions."

How logical will it be if brewers are hauled before courts for advertising for draymen, while Her Majesty's Government is quite happily discriminating against women every day of the week in its social security, national insurance and taxation policies and regulations? Basically the Campaign's position is that it is quite impossible to claim to be changing attitudes which are really ingrained in

sex discrimination



houses of parliament from a painting by Claude Monet

society as a whole, if you are at the same time ignoring them in their most sophisticated form.

The Campaign believes that if women are not to continue being treated as "dependants" and half-people, instead of persons in their own right, then apart from any biological difference men and women should have the same rights and responsibilities. For example, at the moment fathers fail to get custody of their children, merely because they are men, and women get them merely because they are women.

"Sex and race discrimination will be dealt with separately at this stage, but my ultimate aim is to harmonise, and possibly amalgamate the powers and procedures for dealing with both forms of discrimination."

Labour's approach, which will allow women to drive buses if they apply, or to obtain mortgages if they can afford to apply, could well result from an obsession with race relations legislation, which in reality provides no kind of model for application in the field of sex discrimination.

There is little identity of real interest between ethnic minorities and women. Lawyers, politicians and other thinkers may readily see conceptual connections in the two types of discrimination, but it's doubtful if the public do (male, female, black or white).

The point of sex discrimination legislation is surely that it ought to be as acceptable and implementable and persuasive as it possibly can be. A generalistic (sex and race combined) approach would be harmful rather than helpful, as well as unnecessary: it is not in the

interests of either ethnic minorities or women to have this generalistic approach. There is no legal discrimination against ethnic minorities in social security, national insurance and taxation matters - and not only that, but you could never go into a factory and ask how much do the white men get and how much do the coloured men get, as you could ask as between men and women.

"Employment complaints will be considered by industrial tribunals; other complaints will go to specially designated county courts in England and Wales and to the Sheriff courts in Scotland."

An Equal Opportunities Commission with responsibility for enforcing the law will issue non-discrimination notices, conduct research, educate and persuade public opinion."

If women themselves feel that the law is not honestly consistent and encouraging, then they won't pick up the confidence and spread out into new areas. It is only by setting up a situation where under law and under custom, practice and action, women are not declared to be dependants, that the "woman question" can be resolved.■

The Sex Discrimination Act Campaign presented a National Petition to the House of Commons in November 1973 outlining the minimum requirements for any effective and comprehensive discrimination legislation. Supporters of the Campaign throughout the country lead discussions, obtain promises of support from their MPs, publicise the issue in their local papers. The Campaign will provide literature and facts and figures on discrimination, from 148 Bushey Mill Lane, Watford, Herts.

in practice

After being turned away from a South London branch of J & F Stone's electrical appliance stores, where she had gone to buy a fridge, by being told that her husband would have to sign the papers for her as he was "responsible" for her actions in the eyes of the law, Carrie Dunne decided to look into the position of women in law as regards HP purchases.

"I think a lot of women would be grateful to know what their true position is in law, before the Sex Discrimination Bill becomes an Act", she said.

She was told by a law centre that she can be asked to give a guarantor, even a male guarantor if a store insists, but that her husband doesn't have to sign for her. So she sent a strong letter of complaint to the head office and began to piece together the legal background.

Stone's explained that they ask for a guarantor if the wife is unemployed and dependant on her husband, but not if the wife is working.

The NCCL told her that credit facilities will be included in the new anti-discrimination law. "But it seems that even then you would have to go to court to get damages. Well, women don't want damages, they want to be able to get credit on equal terms with men. There must be many couples like me and my husband, where the wife earns as much, if not more, than the husband and they split the household expenditure between them."

"What's the point of giving women rights if they have to go to court (and pay) to get them? Obviously the prospect of court, and of the expense, will deter most women and they'll compromise by trying for a better reception at the next shop."

"Apparently the Consumer Credit Act will attempt to establish 'fair trading' (for women?) but won't be implemented until 1976", Carrie continued. "The women who are the most discriminated against are the dependent housewives who will probably give up at the first hurdle if they think they may have to go to court. With no bank managers in the cupboard and no access cards to rely on, it's time the 'silent majority' of women could have a little dignity in their lives too", she said.■

If you've ever had trichomoniasis, or 'trich', - a common parasitic infestation in the vagina - you will almost certainly have been given Flagyl (generic name: metronidazole) - by far the most effective drug on the market for this condition.

Flagyl is not the kind of drug that an informed person would take at the flick of a doctor's prescribing wrist. Apart from unpleasant side effects such as nausea, dizziness, cramps, diarrhoea and gastric upset, it can cause blood disorders. You may also develop 'thrush' as a result of this drug.

Moreover, researchers in the States (Rustia and Shubik) have just found that Flagyl produces cancer in mice: lung cancer in both sexes and blood cancer in females, and a petition to ban it has been filed with the American Food and Drug Administration (FDA) by the Health Research Group. It seems that the FDA (which controls the use of drugs in the US) had accepted the assertions of the manufacturer (Searle Inc.) that Flagyl was not cancer-producing. Following Rustia and Shubik's independent research however, the FDA re-examined Searle's data and decided that Flagyl is in fact cancer-producing. According to an HRG spokeswoman, if the FDA knows that a drug can cause cancer in animals, it will not even allow human testing, but despite its findings, the FDA has not banned the drug.

Our problems are compounded by a package called Flagyl Compak by May and Baker (consisting of flagyl - for trich - and nystatin - for thrush). The idea is that both drugs should be taken even though both conditions may not be present. It is widely advertised as 'useful for the busy GP who is not sure whether he is dealing with trich or thrush'. In other words, prescribe a possibly dangerous, unpleasant drug which is very expensive (DHSS take note), for an undiagnosed condition which might not be trich and which could be aggravated by this drug. Flagyl can even *cause* thrush!

Medical opinion here is that the drug is relatively safe. This is not surprising when 'Mims' - a standard reference - recommends no caution except for pregnant or lactating (breast-feeding) women, and May and Baker states that 'there are no absolute contra-indications'. Out of five doctors whom I consulted, four (all to some extent involved in the women's movement) knew nothing about the importance of blood monitoring and the fifth - a man - was first alerted to this fact

Flagyl Compak

In vaginitis/vaginal discharge you want the right answer, right away

?



9 times out of 10
we have the
perfect
arrangement

complete,
immediate treatment
for Candida,
Trichomonas
or mixed infection

Nine times out of ten 'Flagyl Compak' is the "perfect arrangement" for immediately prescribable, highly successful treatment of vaginitis. Even when, clinically, the nature of the infection is unclear.

Immediately prescribable because nine times out of ten the probability is trichomoniasis, candidiasis or both^{1,2} - and 'Flagyl Compak' supplies the answer to each. 'Flagyl' for "TV." Nystatin for "thrush." The two for the two together.

Highly successful because nine times out of ten 'Flagyl Compak' supplies a fully effective answer. Each agent has a cure rate of 98 per cent.^{3,4} Both can produce cure in just one week.

In vaginitis, even when there's uncertainty, could anything be surer - right from the start?

when he was working in the US. In fact one doctor at the National WL Conference felt the combination in Flagyl Compak was very useful - and 'what would you do faced with a woman with an infernal itch on a Friday whose sample couldn't be diagnosed until days later?' I retired chastened, later to find that trich is very easy to diagnose on the spot, with saline solution and a microscope.

Faced with the risks and problems I have outlined, the potential Flagyl-taker could bear in mind the following points: *Be

sure that trich has been diagnosed.

*If your doctor will not do this, a VD or 'special' clinic at a hospital should get quick results. You could easily learn to diagnose it yourself but remember that quite a high percentage of trich cases also have gonorrhoea which even some gynaecologists can't diagnose properly.

*Flagyl should be avoided if you have a history of diseases of the blood or central nervous system, and during pregnancy or lactation.

*Searle themselves recommend taking a blood test for white cell count after treatment to make sure

the blood is normal and, with a repeat course, blood should be tested before, during and afterwards.

*Intervals of 4-6 weeks should elapse between courses.

*Alcohol and sex should be avoided during treatment.

Meanwhile, a rival drug - Tinidazole - is to be tested on women in the US. The HRG reports that it is already 'associated with a statistically significant increase in the incidence of malignant breast tumours in female mice'...

Jill Rakusen

The 250 women workers at Wingrove and Rogers electrical components factory in Old Swan, Liverpool, who have been put on official strike since July 24th, are among the lowest paid in the city, said engineering union official Mr Broderick. The £1 all-round increase due in November of this year as a step towards equal pay will still raise their take-home wage to only just over £16.

"In June 1973 the AUEW went into the factory to negotiate better rates of pay for these women", he said. Trade union membership began to climb, and again when the union went back this year to establish better rates. "The most important thing, as far as we were concerned, is that the basic rate should have been £20.75. But due to an anomaly in the government's Phase 3 policy, this wasn't possible".

Wingrove and Rogers management said they'd pay a £1.20 bonus, so the AUEW agreed to suspend the go-slow that was going on. "But then Wingrove and Rogers turned turtle and said they'd never agreed to £1.20. They offered £1.00 so the girls withdrew their labour."

At the end of August the women were still out and still picketing "There's no material going in, unless they take it in after midnight" said Winnie Gibbs, one of the strikers. "So what they're doing in there, we don't know."

Apart from 15 women who have broken the picket line and gone back in - "I think they got a bit frightened", Winnie said - the picketing has been solid, and supported by women from Liverpool women's centre and workers from nearby factories. Workers at a second Wingrove and Rogers plant in Kirkby have stopped work in support of the strikers.

"You can take it from me that these girls are very active indeed", continued Mr Broderick. "I know some that arrive there at 7 a.m. And they're very pleased to note that the Trades Council is taking part in the picketing."

"There have been several rubbishy pieces about the 'petticoat pickets' in the local paper", said one of the women from the women's centre. "They've talked a lot about the media - they could see how people believed it until they were actually involved in it. They know that the bosses have lied on TV and in the papers."

"It's rained a lot down there. But they really have a laugh and keep up - this morning Rita had a bowhorn. They seem really pleased that we keep coming along. Several keep asking me if I come voluntarily, or if I get paid. They don't seem to understand about people just identifying with them."



"There's incredible hostility between the women who are on strike and the ones who've gone back. There doesn't seem to be an understanding of the pressures on women to go back. Most of them live locally, so I suggested would it be possible for people who work in the same room to go and see them in their homes. But they're all feeling pretty pushed - they've been out for so long."

She said the strikers tell the women who go in that they're "doing two jobs - you're covering for women on strike". "How do you spell 'man'?", they would say to the men going in.

"People who are desperate for money might not be working there", she went on. "They like it, it's local. But they know they get rubbish money."

Cathy Clark from Liverpool women's centre talked with Rita Smith, a shop steward at Wingrove and Rogers.

Can you just say a bit about what actually sparked off this particular strike?

Well yes, because we wanted the threshold. We're only on the basic minimum pay of £18-66. This is all we've ever received: the basic pay. We've no bonus scheme operating in this factory at the moment. They promised us one 12 months ago in negotiation with the union - we're still waiting for it and they couldn't come up with figures. Naturally when the threshold agreement began to be settled everywhere in other factories we seized on this, you know, as an opportunity to give us better pay.

And they refused to pay the threshold, asking us still to wait for a bonus, after waiting for 12 months anyway. So this sparked off the present strike.

So the specific demands are for the bonus, the threshold - is there also a demand about a raise in pay?

Well, anything at all, more or less, because when you're on the basic pay you must have more money. The basic pay is no use to anybody, and that's all Wingrove & Rogers have ever paid.

What about the role of the male workers in the strike?

Well, the factory is mostly made up of women. There aren't many male workers in the factory. There are a few unskilled men, semi-skilled - and the toolmakers. And the toolmakers have been called out by us, been drawn out by the union. The other men in the autos came out voluntarily with us, but they are in a minority.

And what about Wingrove and Rogers in Kirkby?

The factory in Kirkby has been called out now after we've been out on strike four weeks. They've been called out by the union in an effort to achieve something for us.

Can you say a bit about what the official leadership of the AUEW has actually done about this? For instance, I think this wasn't made an official strike for quite a long time, and you didn't get your strike pay for quite a while.

No this isn't true. The strike was official from the moment we came out. Anybody tells you any different - it's just not true. The reason for the holdup in strike pay is because these things take time, and it's rather a lot of money! But now we've all been paid our strike pay in bulk from the minute we came out.

We were at the mass meeting on July 15 when we heard the AUEW official Mr. Broderick, and he said, "What you need in this strike is money, more than publicity." But that's not what we've heard here. Can you explain what you're doing about publicity and money.

As regards publicity, we have been in touch with Granada Reports three times and we've had no help from them at all. We've had a few small articles in the *Daily Post*, thanks to Women's Lib. But other than that we haven't had publicity, probably because we're not very militant picketers.

The women are very strong - they've never had a strike here before, a union strike, ever. This is our fifth week and the women are still determined to fight. So - I'm very pleased with them, really. But they're not women who are going to batter the scabs that are going in, you know. They don't swear at them or anything like that as far as I know, and I'm here most of the time.

Finance, yes. Some engineering factories have been very good, you know, local engineering factories. But we've got a strike committee going now and we've had leaflets printed ■

NEWS FROM THE NORTH

A survey in Oldham by Asian community worker Ms Kanta Walker revealed that Moslem women, mainly Pakistanis from rural backgrounds, suffered mental illness and neuroses because of conflicts between their cultural values and the life they face as immigrants.

Confined to their homes by the repressive purdah system they are also cut off from many of the links which supported them in their home villages. Because their husbands felt they should stay at home, none of the women went out to work, and adolescent girls who had just left school were staying at home doing nothing.

Cultural reasons prevented the women attending evening classes, says Ms Walker, who recommends local day time activity centres linked with playgroups where they could meet to learn skills and English. The study, commissioned by the joint Home Office and local authority community development project in Oldham, suggested that an Asian social worker should be attached to schools to work with adolescent girls.

York Women's Action are campaigning for a "shoppers creche" in the city centre where harrassed parents could safely leave their children while they battle with traffic, prices and each other in the town's shopping area.

Leafletting and petitioning have already brought a sympathetic response from shoppers, and the group is presently waiting for a response just as encouraging from York Chamber of Trade which has been asked to finance the venture.

A spokeswoman for the group said they had asked the Chamber of Trade to finance the creche rather than the Council, because as business people they ought to be responsible for the social cost of shopping.

No suitable property has yet been found because of the strict space and sanitation regulations governing creches. "We are trying church halls and estate agents now. We tried to get an empty shop in the new arcade in York, Davygate, but we were turned down."

Support is now being canvassed from councillors and the Trades Council in York. The creche would initially open on busy market days - Tuesday, Friday and Saturday - from 10am to 4.30pm, with facilities and paid helpers to accommodate 25 children at any one time.

A twelve-week course on health education for women starts in Leeds on September 19th, organised by the Chapel-town women's health group and the Workers Educational Association.

Topics for discussion on the course are specifically concerned with women ranging through menstruation, contraception, abortion, VD, pregnancy, childbirth, the menopause, gynaecological illnesses, with related items like diet, genetics, sex education and the workings of the NHS.

Leading the course is Alison Garthwaite, who said that the Workers Educational Association have responded very enthusiastically to the idea of a course, which originated in the self-help group in Chapeltown. It is being held on Thursdays in the afternoon at the Swarthmore Adult Education Centre, Woodhouse Square, and in the evening at the Chapeltown Community Centre.

"There will be child care provided at Swarthmore and Chapeltown women's health group will try to arrange babysitters for the evening sessions", said Ms Garthwaite. "The WEA were very enthusiastic about the course, but we need at least 10 people to enrol for the course to go ahead."

Manchester Council for Community Relations have applied for a government urban aid grant to set up a battered wives unit for Asian women, thought to be the first of its kind in the country.

The application has been approved by Manchester's housing committee to be considered by the full council at the end of the month.

A capital grant of £2,250 plus a non-capital grant of £16,160 over five years is required by the Council for Community Relations to provide three furnished flats for Asian women and their children, whose culture and religion stress supremacy of the male adult.

A report to the housing committee said the Council was particularly concerned at the incidence of wife-beating in the Asian community. Most Asian women had little knowledge of their legal rights and would endure a great deal of physical and mental cruelty before seeking help. Many come to the notice of helping agencies only at the point of mental breakdown.

The proposal for the unit includes appointment of a social worker preferably an Asian woman ■

THE ONES THAT GOT AWAY

Zoe Fairbairns sifts the media...

Summer is supposed to be the time of year when, with little news to report, the media confine themselves to silliness: but the media are always silly about women, so it's hard to spot the difference. The silliest editorial of the Summer, from the Express (July 24), was also one of the shortest, and so can be quoted in full: "Less than a week after the Tower of London bombing, Home Secretary Roy Jenkins promises a powerful new board - to enforce the law on sex discrimination! At a moment when our society is under violent attack the Home Secretary should be concentrating all his efforts to combat the terrorists. For the sake of public safety, Mr Jenkins should get his priorities right." The silliest ecclesiastical pronouncement came from the Monthly Record, official publication of the Scottish Free Church, which was quoted in the Scotsman (August 5) as savagely opposing the holding of a gay rights congress in Edinburgh in December. "The toleration of this repugnant and disgusting vice, which has already made it semi-respectable across the Border, is growing to such an extent," thundered the Record, "that one might almost expect a modern city to twin with Sodom or Gomorrah, were they extant municipalities."

The silliest advert was in the Times on August 2; it sought "Experienced groom, or two girls with own horse." And the silliest new revelation about legal etiquette appeared in the Morning Star on August 1: "Miss Rose Heilbron QC yesterday became the second woman to be appointed as a High Court judge. She will be known as Mrs Justice Heilbron."

News from the world of women's work: Belgian air-hostesses are resisting Sabena's practice of checking up on their continued beauty as a condition of continued

employment, and a Japanese stewardess in Tokyo has won a court injunction against Air France who dismissed her because she was too plump. (Times, August 8.) In London, the Daily Telegraph on July 19 devoted an astonishing full column-and-a-half to the moans of businessmen that they are having to pay £70 a week for a temp typist, when the same girl would get about half that if she would only become 'permanent.'

From the United States comes the welcome news that admission of women to the medical profession has more than doubled in the past three years. The welcome must be tempered with caution, however, when we hear comments such as the following from Dr Anne Lawrence from the University of Chicago's School of Medicine: "It (medicine) is suited to women's personalities, the comforting and care of the miserable." Similar claims have been used so often by men as excuses for unloading low-paid dirty work onto women, that we must be cautious. It remains to be seen whether the effect in the U.S. will be to strengthen "female" personality traits among male doctors, or to lower the status of medicine until men leave it altogether.

No surprises in the way the women's golf championship at Sunningdale in August was reported - Peter Dobereiner, The Observer: "Mrs Judy Rankin, who is exceptional among women professional golfers in being petite, feminine and married..." and so on, and so on. And on August 18, the Observer Back Page carried a short piece on the women's chess championships at Clacton. It concluded: "Perhaps they were enjoying themselves - it certainly didn't look like it." What did the writer expect from the women - a cheery wave between moves, a wiggle and a giggle to show that they were feminine after all? It's the same syndrome as when you are walking down the street with something on your mind, and a male stranger, hurt that you have not dazzled him with your smile, urges "Cheer up, love." ■

Women in Chile - a year after the coup

'Undoubtedly,' exalts a recent government-approved pamphlet from Chile, 'the role played by the Chilean women was one of the most decisive factors in the fight against Marxist oppression'. And there can be no doubt that the massive 'marches of the empty pots,' the taunting of the armed forces by middle class women's groups daring them to come out and fight and the discreet little dinner parties held throughout pre-coup Chile to bring together potential 'golpistas', played their part in toppling the popularly-elected government of Salvador Allende last September.

However a year later evidence is now becoming available to indicate that the actions of the women's groups were not as spontaneous as they may have appeared at the time. The California-based *Brazilian Information Bulletin* has recently charged that Brazilian specialists, coached by US advisors and supported by funds from Christian Democratic parties in Holland and West Germany, unions in the United States and right-wing groups in Brazil, had instructed men's gremios (co-operatives) on how to organise women's demonstrations around the slogan, 'We've given you the recipe, now bake the cake' in order to give the military forces support for their contention that 'the public wants a coup'.

BIB also charged that Brazilian advisors counselled Chilean women in rumour-spreading techniques focussing on civil war fears, food shortages and personal slander against Allende in order to weaken confidence in the Popular Unity government. However it must be stated that the ground was fertile in Chile for the spreading of such stories.

Women in Chile are generally

under-educated products of a traditionalist, male-dominated and largely Catholic society. Working class women were easily frightened by reports that under Allende their children would be sent to Russia or taken away from them and raised by the state, or that it would be forbidden to speak of God in a socialist Chile. Many gradually lost these fears as they began to reap the benefits of the progressive medical, social and educational schemes initiated by the Popular Unity government, but the right continued its efforts to organise middle class women who were disgruntled at their lessening privilege in Allende's Chile.

Following Allende's overthrow many such women turned in their wedding rings as a symbolic gesture of support for the newly triumphant junta's National Reconstruction Fund, and recent fact-finding delegations to Chile have been assured by the bon bourgeoisie of Santiago that all is still well, with tonic back on the super-market shelves and horseback riding once again possible. However it is clear to many observers that women have a greatly diminished role in policy-making since the coup and needless to say, in a situation where the Allende government has retroactively been declared illegal; and censorship, repression and lack of respect for human rights prevail, women on the left have fared very badly.

There are many women, for example, amongst the lawyers arrested in order to intimidate

those attempting to defend political detainees, the trade union leaders eliminated in order to crush popular support for the overthrown Popular Unity forces, the theatrical people detained because they had participated in popular arts movements and the large numbers of medical personnel persecuted in an effort to totally discredit and dismantle the socialised medical scheme pushed forward under Allende. Other women and their children have been arrested and maltreated throughout Chile by established as well as unofficial police groups merely because they are related to people being sought by the junta.

According to Mirtal Vidal, national staff member of the United States Committee for Justice to Latin American Political Prisoners, (USLA), 'Among the worst victims of the junta's repression are a group of women being held at two detention camps in Chile - El Buen Pastor (the Good Shepherd) in Santiago and the Tejas Verde concentration camp. The latter is possibly now closed. Ms. Vidal was speaking at a press conference held in New York on June 5 to make public a document recently

received from Chile, but the evidence produced at the conference is simply the latest in a series of reports which have documented the torture and indignities inflicted upon women arrested in Chile since last September's coup.

According to material now available from several sources, political prisoners, both male and female, have been subjected to icy baths, hung by their hands or feet or tied to chairs for days on end without food or water, brutally beaten and whipped, and in methods apparently 'imported' by Brazilian experts, interrogated with the 'aid' of lighted cigarettes and electric shock equipment applied to the nostrils, eyelids, anus and genital organs.



Early in September pro-coup elements of the Armed Forces began raiding poor slum areas and rural Indian settlements in a search for the weapons which they claimed Allende supporters were stock-piling. This Mapuche Indian woman testified that she and her children were held captive at gun point while the men in her village were continuously interrogated and tortured over a four-day period.

Two shots of pro-Allende demonstrations held in early September 1973 as Unidad Popular women attempted to counteract the impact of right women's "empty pots marches".



Psychological torture, such as threats to the victim's family, accompanied by recorded cries allegedly made while relatives were undergoing interrogation and torture, is also used.

And, as we have all too sadly seen again recently in Cyprus, women in time of war or civil upheaval are also vulnerable sexually, whether they are politically suspect or not. Instances have been reported of arbitrary arrests of women, who have been released without interrogation after repeated rapes by drunken soldiers, while a recent report submitted to the United Nations Committee on Human Rights and the United States Senate by a six-member delegation of the US branch of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, presents strong evidence that sexual abuse has apparently been adopted in interrogation centres as a standard technique in the questioning of

treatment and reported that prior to their transfer to Buen Pastor, only two amongst them had not been raped.

According to the prisoners, some women had had mice and insects inserted in their vaginas; pregnant women had been beaten until they aborted. In another case, the foetus carried by a woman subjected to electric shock treatment is still considered viable, but the prognosis is that the child will be born with severe brain damage. Other horror stories tell of prisoners being forced to eat excrement and semen.

The women at Buen Pastor prison have improved the dirty, pest-infected centre since they arrived, but nutrition remains inadequate, and their most appalling complaint still stands; women who were repeatedly raped by unknown assailants and now find themselves pregnant

latrines to the centre of the community.

WILPF also learned that other women whose husbands had been killed by the junta often could not leave Chile or obtain any sort of social assistance without a certificate attesting to their husband's death, a document which was impossible to obtain in many instances where the junta denied that the deceased spouse had in fact ever been arrested. Other women have been stranded for months in foreign embassies where they had taken refuge following the coup. Junta officials refused to award them 'safe conduct' passes in cases where relatives were still being sought.

With a fascist twist to a typical sexist technique, a pro-Junta Santiago newspaper *La Segunda* resorted to ridicule as a means of diminishing the impact of WILPF's report on its visit to Chile. The newspaper's article on WILPF's report on its visit to Chile. The newspaper's article on WILPF's findings was headlined 'Majaderia Internacional', (perhaps weakly translatable as 'International Jackassery') and scornfully reported that the 'little old ladies' carried notebooks filled

with appointments and asked questions about just how many litres of blood had been spilled in post-coup Chile.

Nonetheless, the allegations by WILPF that women in Chile have been subjected to vile degradations as human beings and as women have been supported by countless other bodies, including the Chicago Commission of Inquiry, the International Federation of Women, Amnesty International and legal and medical groups which have visited Chile in the last year. Courageous Chilean women have done their best to make these facts known abroad; the prisoners in Buen Pastor prison, for example, who risked further torture in order to tell their story, did so, they said, in order to protect the others, who are daily being brought to interrogation centres in Chile. If you are interested in helping inform women in this country about events in Chile in order to petition the Chilean regime for an end to such atrocities, please contact me at Amnesty International (404-5831) or at 226-9459. ■

Tracy Ulltveit-Moe



female suspects. The victim is blind-folded and stripped in front of a roomful of men; she is then thrown from man to man until she falls. Multiple assault then follows. Cases of male prisoners forced to rape female prisoners under threat of further torture for one or both, have also been reported.

The WILPF delegation collected its evidence during a visit to Chile in January and February of this year; surprisingly they were permitted a short visit to the Buen Pastor prison referred to above. Authorities maintained that the approximately 95 women held at the prison were largely prostitutes or thieves, but the nuns running the centre told the delegates that in fact almost all were political prisoners. The detainees, almost all of whom were still uncharged, were initially afraid to speak to the WILPF group, but when they learned the purpose of their visit, the prisoners crowded round, many with heads shaved or nipples burnt from electric shock

have been refused abortions. When they requested a doctor, only an ear specialist was sent, and the women were told that they should be proud of 'what they had in their bellies'. The psychological effects of such treatment can well be imagined and are already evident amongst many women and children.

The WILPF delegation also saw children who bore scars and had required hospitalisation due to beatings they had received from soldiers who were intent on using any means available to locate the children's relatives; they visited poor areas in Santiago and heard testimony concerning the hardships the poor were undergoing due to sky-rocketing inflation and the dismantling of welfare programmes, free milk schemes and health facilities initiated under the Allende government. Women told the WILPF delegates of the typhoid epidemic affecting their children because authorities intent on keen surveillance in working class areas had forced the removal of all

elsa
rudolfi
~actress
member
of
allende's
cultural
commission



"Black women do not believe in the myth of the dignity of women's work, or myths about professionalism : their history as slaves and colonials tells them that service equals servitude...."

"Whatever methods women find to struggle, in whatever sphere they make the struggle - in their own way - they are raising issues that face us all. To subsume these struggles to the 'general struggle' is not only to be racist and anti-women, but anti working class."

RACE TODAY Editorial. August 1974

Published monthly, Race Today records and recognises the Black struggle - in Britain and abroad. It's hard-hitting, controversial and readable, essential reading for the committed and the activist. It carries in-depth reporting, interviews, reviews, theoretical discussion. It costs 20p for a single issue, or £2.60 for an annual subscription, post-paid. A free sample copy will be gladly sent on request.

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Abortion - a Woman's Right To Choose

- New campaign needs organiser 2½ days per week (£1,000 p.a.) Typing essential. Apply in writing to: Jane Barker 223 Tottenham Court Road, London W.1. - by October 4th.

GROUPS

Homosexual Women & Men can ring Ice-breakers on 01 274 9590 every evening of the year between 7.30 & 10.30 to talk over their problems with other gay people.

Luton, Womens Action Group - meets at Partisan Books, 34 Dallow Road, Luton, Beds. on Wed. evening at 8pm. Kids welcome. Tel: 0582-597932

Join Friendly Groups of young people (20-35) with similar interests going out together in London meals/films/shows/etc. London Linkup: 278-6783-4 (office hours)

Homosexual/Bisexual Women join the Campaign for Homosexual Equality. CHE is your voice - make it louder! Meetings and socials throughout Britain. Send 9 x 4 see to CHE (332). 28 Kennedy Street, Manchester 2

BOOKS

Report on workshop 'From our sexuality to sexual politics' - available from: 75 Offord Road, London, N1 (Send 17p P.O.)

Women's Liberation Literature or any books. Send SAE for free booklet to H. Rutovitz, 31 Royal Terrace, Edinburgh.

Anti-Apartheid News describes what life is like in Vorster's South Africa, carries news of the liberation struggle in South Africa, Rhodesia, Namibia and Portugal's African colonies, exposes British collaboration with apartheid - and involves you in the fight against it. 10 issues a year. Membership of the Anti-Apartheid Movement (which includes subscription to AA News), £2 pa: subscription only, 75p pa. Anti-Apartheid Movement, 89 Charlotte St., London W1. Tel. 01-580 5211

Sappho Magazine. Published by homosexual women for all women. Monthly 40p inc. postage. BCM/PETREL, London WC1V 8XX. Meeting first Monday each month. Info: time/venue write to BCM/PETREL.

Edinburgh's largest selection of gay and women's liberation books and pamphlets available at Shirlee's Stall, Greyfriars Market, 14 Forrest Road.

New Design W.L. Badge. 14p (incl. postage). Stop Rape American pamphlet on self-defence for women (illustrated) 26p (incl. postage) From Sisterhood Books, c/o 22 Great Windmill st, London W1.

Are you 'UP AGAINST THE LAW' ...? then send for this magazine. 20p monthly. £2.50 1 years subscription. (£6 to lawyers & professionals) Write to: 66 York Way, London N.1.

Women's Books, wide range available from 11 Waverley Rd., Bristol 6.

Women's Liberation Workshop 38 Earlham St, London WC1. Huge range of books now available, send SAE for list.

Nuclear Testing can mean cancer, damaged babies, and war. The Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament fights against all nuclear weapons. Keep in touch by reading Sanity - £1 per year. CND, 14 Gray's Inn Rd., London WC1

GENERAL

The New School, W11. Free school - now in its 6th year - needs kids ages 5 yrs to 11. Contact Sue Israel 01 994 0548.

Young 60+ seeks room, share flat others similar outlook, background; comparable mental age more vital than years; intellect valued homegrown as well as academically polished; interesting preliminary discussions essential; London preferred but interested in all possibilities. Box Number 28-1.

Teacher & Son (11) would like occasional floorspace and/or holiday let for visits to London. Tel: 0632 856458.

Clairvoyant Josephine Day. Personal/postal readings. Ring for appt. or send hairnrip, birthdate; own writing. Fee £3. 52 Little Gearies, Essex. 01 550 5554.

Women Psychotherapist (Jungian) now has vacancies Highgate area Tel: 01-348 5593

Gentle Ghost services include: artists cooking, decorating, domestic services, dressmaking, gardening, journalism, research, removals, secretarial and teaching.; but try us for anything and we may be able to help. 01-603 2871 services; 603 2865 removals; 603 3729 restaurant, 603 8983 help advice and information. 33 Norland Rd; London W11.

AFRICAN STUDIES - Arabic, Swahili. African literature, Modern dance & african rhythms, Dressmaking, Community Studies - at the AFRICAN CENTRE, 38 King St., London W.C.1. Please ring for more info - 01-836 1973.

Women At Home can study for interior design diploma through accredited correspondence course. Colour prospectus from Dept. SR, Rhodoc International, School of Design, Rhodoc House, Yelverton, Devon PL20 6DY

Female/female exclusive introductions: highly confidential service for release, friendship, liberation, etc. SAE - "Lesbos and Ariadne", The Golden Wheel, Liverpool L15 3HT

Gentle Ghost Help, Advice and information. If there is no-one you can share your problems with or if you are suffering from the unrealities of our materialist society, come along to 33 Norland Rd., W11. (2nd floor) where there will be someone you can talk to (in private); or phone 01-603-8983 Mon-Sat 10am-6pm.

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Men Only!

Labour will make this illegal

Every woman knows the kind of regulation that makes life frustrating. Like being told that you can't have credit in a shop unless your husband signs a form. As if, just because you're female, you're foolish and irresponsible too.

Or being refused a mortgage for the same reason. Or being turned away from a restaurant because you are not accompanied by a male. Labour will change all this. By law. Which is one reason why women will win with Labour.



SHORTLIST

compiled by Michele Roberts *Feel free to send any information to Shortlist, Spare Rib, 9 Newburgh St, London W1A 4XS*

agit prop

Women and health.

There is going to be a conference on women and health held in Sheffield on the weekend of October 5th and 6th. The idea came out of a workshop at the national women's conference held recently in Edinburgh. It is hoped that this weekend of workshops will be a great opportunity for women working within the health service and women dealing with medical care as consumers to share their experiences and practical ideas for change.

Among the suggested workshops are: self-examination; menopause and post-menopause; premenstrual tension; medical care in China; pregnancy and childbirth; present struggles within the health service; contraception; VD; abortion; herbal medicine; nutrition; and cystitis. It is planned to tape all the workshops and also to video parts of the conference and so from the ideas that are brought together to publish a newsletter and/or a health handbook. At this stage in the planning of the conference (this information was received in August but it's still not too late, hopefully, to participate) the planning collective would like to hear from individual women and groups about any workshops they'd like to present, any topics that women would like discussed at the conference, anything written to be distributed through the conference, and any films, demonstrations or displays that anyone would like to suggest. For more information on venue, times, registration and programme, contact the planning collective at 7, Coupe Road, Sheffield 3.

Women at work in Wales.

There will be a conference held on the subject of women at work in Wales at the Great Hall, UWIST, Cathay's Park, Cardiff, on Saturday November 2nd, 10am-5.30pm. The conference is sponsored by the NCCL. The agenda is as follows: morning session on anti-discrimination and equal pay; afternoon session on action at the workplace via a choice of workshops on anti-discrimination, equal pay, the Working Women's Charter, and women and the unions. Creche facilities are included in the conference registration fee of £1 (50p for claimants, pensioners and students). For registration forms and further information contact Mary Slater, 47, Marlborough Rd, Cardiff. For telephone enquiries ring Cardiff (0222) 28908, Monday to Saturday 10-6.30pm.

United Nations Day.

A panel discussion by delegates to Bucharest on the UN theme for 1974—population—will be held in the Tewson Room, 23-25 Mortimer Street, London W1, at 12 noon, on Thursday October 24th. The discussion has been organised by the FPA for World Population Year, and

admission costs 75p, students 30p. This could be an opportunity for feminists in the audience to introduce discussion around self-determination versus state control, and criticisms of current population planning made for the Third World by the First World-genocidal control of the poor.

Women's rights course.

The north of Scotland district WEA is holding a women's rights course in the autumn term. They are planning to draw on all kinds of local expertise for it and to follow it with a women's studies course organised by the local WL group. The series of ten meetings will commence on Thursday 3rd October at 7.30pm at St Katherine's Club, 5, West North St, Aberdeen. The course will focus on the rights of women in a male-dominated society, and will examine in detail the following areas: the health service; housing; money; law; work; supplementary benefits; industrial benefits; schools and education; legislation. The classes will take the form of a seminar, with at least two authorities on a subject at each session, as well as well-informed members of the WL group. The aim of the course is to give women knowledge and skills which they can use on their own problems and pass on to other women. For further information contact Nina Powell, WEA, 480 Union St, Aberdeen.

Nottingham Working Women's Charter Group.

There will be a public meeting on the Working Women's Charter on Saturday October 19th at 2pm in the Albert Hall, Nottingham. Speakers from ASTMS, Labour Party, Hackney Trades Council and Nottingham Women's Liberation Group. We hope to establish an active Working Women's Charter Campaign in the Nottingham area. Any support, queries, information etc contact: Women's Centre, 26 Newcastle Chambers, Angel Row, Nottingham. tel: Nottingham 604074.

Nottingham Nursery Campaign.

As a result of discussion at the NCCL conference in June in Nottingham, a one-day conference/workshop on the need for a nursery campaign will be held on October 26th. Discussion to include: nursery centres, factory nurseries, child minders, Trade Union support, local-and-national tactics. Contact Margaret Purdey, Women's centre (as above), but a different tel: 0602 863894.

Nottingham Conference on Sexism in Schools.

A conference on 'Women and Education' is being planned for the new year in Nottingham. The planned themes of the conference are on sexism in school courses and books, sex-role stereotyping and discrimination against women teachers.

The organisers of the conference - ►

teachers and members of women's liberation - are busy collecting material on these subjects and we will be grateful for any information, papers etc. you can send us. Also, if you have had any experience in organising a similar conference or meeting perhaps you could write and let us have any details which would be helpful. Contact 18 Corporation Oaks, Nottingham.

publications

Copeman.

The third issue of this journal, produced by a collective within COPE, is now out, obtainable from left bookshops and from Copeman, 15, Acklam Rd, London W.10. It's a special women's issue, edited by a woman this time, and contains news, reviews, poems, cartoons and articles all centring around critiques of current methods used by the state to contain what is 'normally' described as mental illness. i.e. etc, drugs, lobotomy. COPE aims to provide support for people in emotional crisis; the journal itself is angry, many-stranded, depressed, provocative, just like all of us in crisis, in fact. Take a deep breath and a valium and read on. . . .

Women's Report.

Volume 2, issue 5, July-August, is now out, obtainable from left bookshops; the WL Workshop, 38, Earls Court, London, WC2; and from 75, Albert Palace Mansions, Lurline Gdns, London, SW11, price 17p. Subscriptions minimum £1, sustaining subscriptions £2 or more. Cheques payable to Women's Report at the London address above. Indispensable for news, information, perspectives on action; the current issue contains all that plus book reviews, analyses of what's been happening to us and our sisters right across the world, lists of publications and details of feminist activities past and present.

Publications-distribution.

A national distribution network for all movement literature is being planned, with local contacts all over Britain, to organise sales in any place where material is or could be sold: women's centres, sympathetic bookstores, trade union branches, community centres, playgroups, women's groups, etc. The planning collective needs to know of

women who could help organise and order for sales. It also hopes to create a central address where bulk mail orders can be placed and received and up-to-date lists of available domestic publications maintained. A meeting has been planned for the end of September in London to discuss the creation of this network and to examine the publication needs of the movement. Write for more information or with additional suggestions to Julia Vellacott, 4, Compton Terrace, London, N1.

Aware.

This collective, Action for Women's Advice, Research and Education, is starting an information service on September 2nd. It will be open on week nights between 7 and 9.30pm at 14, Radnor Terrace, London, SW8, tel: 01-622-8495. Helpers are needed to run the service and to help build up information files. Also, any information on doctors and lawyers sympathetic to women should be sent, for the compilation of additional files, to Sally Hesmondhalgh, 8, Kelmscott Rd, London, SW11, tel: 01-228-5278, evenings.

Unsupported mothers.

The unsupported mothers handbook is being written by Brixton Claimants Union. Any donations towards the cost would be very helpful. Contact the CU Publications Fund, c/o Newtown CU, 19, Rea Tower, Birmingham 19.

The wages of caring.

This is a report by The National Council for the Single Woman and her Dependents, obtainable from 166, Victoria St, London, SW1, price 20p. It draws attention to the poverty and isolation of the single woman looking after elderly relatives and calls for a state allowance for such women as well as entitlement to Class I insurance stamps and a full pension.

Social insecurity.

A report on single mothers on benefit by the Child Poverty Action Group, price 45p, obtainable from left bookshops.

Women's Voice.

Issue no. 10, price 5p, obtainable from 61, Tynley Croft, Harlow, Essex. It contains news on women in industry, and abortion in England and France.

first national conference of depressives anonymous

Nemone Lethbridge writes:

Some of the people who wrote to me after my piece in Spare Rib, "Postscript to Baby Blues", will not have had answers to their letters. I'm very sorry about this but I moved house and had a burglary and lost a lot of my post as a result.

Anyway, everyone who is interested is invited to the first national conference of Depressives Anonymous at the Church of St

Mary-le-Bow, Cheapside, London EC2 at 2.30pm on Saturday September 28th. We hope that a distinguished woman psychiatrist will speak, and that we can set up groups all over the country on a proper basis. Please bring either 50p entrance fee or a book of Green Shield Stamps (The Green Shield Company have promised to pay us 60p a book).

theatre

Sweetie Pie.

Harlow Playhouse, as part of its Theatre-in-Education week this autumn, will be putting on seven performances of Sweetie Pie, a show designed to stimulate discussion by fifth and sixth formers of women's role in society. It is both funny and thought-provoking, and covers all spheres of activity and discrimination. The programme will consist of the show, followed by a discussion with actors and director participating. Booking will be taken from September onwards for October 22nd to 26th, performances at 8.15 every day and at 10.15am on Wednesday and Friday. For more information contact Roger Parsley, c/o the Town Hall, Harlow, Essex.

Five till five-thirty.

This is a play by John Anstiss that I went to see at the Little Theatre Club, St Martins Lane. Unfortunately it will be over by the time you read this, otherwise I'd have urged you to go and see it: a study of the middle-class housewife facing middle age and rejection by her family; Pat Lindsay, directed by Joan Campbell, is powerful as the fierce and mystified prisoner of her head, house, home, bed and marriage. The middle-class middle-aged gents in the audience glanced uneasily at their feet rather than at the impolite rawness facing them on stage.

Pulp

Is a weekly news revue going on at 11pm at the King's Head, 115 Upper Street, N1 tel: 226 1916 opening September 26th and running for four weeks, changing every week. There will be a regular team of 10 writers. Catherine Kessler, who is producing the revue, hopes that at least half the writers will be women, since otherwise the show will only be commenting on the already male-dominated news media. Interested contributors phone her at 328 4534.

video

How it is.

Bolton WL group has made a video tape dramatising/discussing some major issues of the women's movement. They would be very glad to lend it to anyone with access to either a Sony Cu-2100 ACE machine or a Shibodun EIAJ/I 610/620. Contact Elaine Glover, 3, Lightburne Ave, Bolton, Lancs. Theatre.

exhibitions

Soft Art

MERET OPPENHEIM
Cup, saucer and
spoon in fur
1936



The exhibits in the Soft Art exhibition at the Camden Arts Centre have a difficult time living up to the layout of the exhibition; it's been put together with such care and effort. The first section comprises 39 excellent photographs of ways twentieth century artists have used soft materials, which makes it clear that no-one has ever surpassed Meret Oppenheim's *Fur Covered Cup and Saucer and Spoon* of 1936. The contradictions inherent in the materials are physically repelling. Jann Haworth, also represented with a photograph, exploits parallels between materials and subject matter in her life-sized, stuffed, sewn figure of a lounging *Maid* in tight shoes. Unfortunately Robert Rauschenberg's *Bed* is included. A mindless insult to another artist, his work consists of the partial destruction of an American pieced quilt.

After the photographs come the work of nine living artists. June Green's big construction of stretched black gauzey material, Barry Flanagan's canvas banners and Nicola's fur environment should all be seen.

The third section is brightly coloured but basically a bit dull. It is Wool Art - all the exhibits are made of wool, but the material rarely speaks for itself or adds an extra dimension to the object represented - although Annette Messager's wool wrapped birds are very disturbing.

Camden Arts Centre, Arkwright Road, London NW3

August 10 - October 13

The poetry of painting.

Maria Krahn and Chloe Silvanus are showing their work at the Pentad Art Centre, Holly Walk, off Church row, Hampstead, London NW3, from August 22nd to November 24th. Go and see these paintings if you can, and produce some better adjectives than mine: patterned, harmonious, mantra-like, glowing.

contacts

Rape.

A collective has been set up recently to study the problem of rape in England, specifically in London. The women involved hope to organize a crisis centre, on the model of those set up in the States, where women who have been raped can come or ring up for practical help and advice on dealing with the rape itself and the possibly following court case. It's hoped to avoid the usual hassles, or at least lessen them, of dealing with sexist doctors and lawyers, by getting a file together of women professionals in these fields who could be attached to the centre and provide practical support for victims of rape. A meeting has been planned for late September: for further information contact Jude

Harris, 26, Talfourd Road, London SE15, tel: 01-701-5601. ■

■ MISPRINT Issue 27, Working Women's Charter Campaign - Address should read: 10 Alwyne Road, Hanwell, London, W.7.



Spare Rib would like to hear from women about themselves and women's liberation. Length to be 1,000 to 1,500 words.

In Issue No.26 we began the series 'Interview'

Interviews can mean that your identity is defined by the other person's reactions.

We think it is easier for women to write themselves. Turn round and where are the mirrors - work, home, people. They have all been ways of seeing women's oppression.

We want reflections of women's liberation.

the images break loose

Shattering the Silence

the correspondences establish themselves

Please write, and we shall publish one article every month in Spare Rib. Address is 9 Newburgh Street, London W1A 4XS. We pay £1 per 100 words, although our financial crisis might mean payment is a bit delayed.

shaking up uncle sam



by Sheila Rowbotham

How has women's liberation affected the lives of working women in the United States?

Myths like women only working for pin money die hard. Though with inflation and more married women working, they are getting hard to maintain. Comparison with America is interesting because many tendencies evident in our society are more developed there. In the United States, as more and more women become involved in the labour force, they can no longer be seen as temporary workers outside the home. Women make up 40% of the labour force. Roughly half all adult women are working for pay. More than 60% of these are married and 75% have children. But there has been only a minimal amount of day care provided. Only 2% of married working women have any public day care facilities. The rest have to make private arrangements. This cuts into their wages which are generally lower than men's - around 59% of the male rate. Black women predominate in the lower paid jobs. Many American women are the sole breadwinners for their families. One out of every ten families are supported just by the woman's wage - either because of divorce, because their husband died or left them, or because they are single women. Women have been badly hit by unemployment and are not very strongly unionised - 6 out of 7 women workers are not members of a union. Those who are unionised find that the men's problems are considered while again and again women's problems are shoved under the carpet.

Karen Smith, a bookbinder in San Francisco, wrote about the male union officials attitude in

a recent issue of a local working women's paper called Union WAGE (Union Women's Alliance to Gain Equality). 'A lot of the union officials just won't stick up for the women. They'll always just try and slide over problems. When you're down there pushing them they'll be all for you, but as soon as you leave they forget about you . . . It's hard to get women to run though, because we all have families and to be an official you have to be free to go to a lot of meetings.'

On the other hand, once women take action they show great perseverance and courage. In March, for example, there was a strike of all the city workers in San Francisco which included many women clerical workers, hospital workers and telephonists. Women kept up the picket lines despite an injunction against them, and sometimes women would picket in isolated parts of the city alone all night - which in the American urban situation can be really dangerous.

Since 1969, the ideas and methods of organisation from the women's movement have had an influence. Either working women have heard about the movement on television, or they have become involved in particular organising projects themselves - for instance, telephonists, waitresses, domestic workers, typists and hospital workers.

In July 1973, some women trade union officials discontented with their own situation in male-dominated unions started to plan a working women's conference. They expected about 800 women to turn up. Over 30,000 enthusiastic and militant women workers

appeared in Chicago in March this year. The mood was both feminist and radical. The Conference launched an organisation called Coalition of Labour Union Women - CLUW for short. CLUW is committed to organising the unorganised and to securing improvements in women's working conditions.

There was real conflict at the conference over Point 14 of the Guidelines. Point 14 said that CLUW should not get involved in disputes about which unions had the right to organise particular workers. This was important because of a dispute between the Farmworkers Union and the Teamsters Union. The Farmworkers Union includes many Mexican immigrant workers in California, who have been trying to organise for many years. The Teamster Union is a big, general union which organises truck drivers, dockers, food processing and clerical workers. Its leadership is corrupt even by American union standards and in cahoots with Nixon. The women Teamster officials were under heavy pressure from their male leaders. They tried to silence Farmworker women and their supporters. Workshop after workshop passed motions to delete Point 14 and at the Plenary session the motion to delete was passed overwhelmingly. Rank and file Teamster women spoke in support of the Farmworkers and farmworker women were given a standing ovation when they spoke on Sunday. But though Point 14 went, one of the officials in control of the conference blocked any attempt to pass a motion in support of the farmworkers.

American socialist feminists are divided

about how useful an organisation like CLUW will be for working women. The pessimists point out that the officials will try to bring it more firmly under their control and that they are already messing up the local meetings so radicals can't get to them. They are dubious about the structure which leaves power in the hands of women who can afford the fare to travel to the National Co-ordinating Committee in Chicago. They feel there is a basic contradiction between rank and file women workers and top officials in the unions, even though some of these have been affected by liberal feminism of the NOW (National Organisation of Women) variety.

Finally, they are critical of the fact that CLUW is restricted to women who are working. Unemployed women, women on welfare and women working in the home are excluded. Some miners' wives travelled to Chicago from Brookside, Kentucky, where they had been picketing in support of miners on strike and have gone to gaol with their children. Despite protests, they were not allowed to participate in the conference because they were not union women.

More optimistically, other socialist feminists point out how important such a large organisation of working women could be. They argue that the local chapters of CLUW are important, not the officials on platforms. Working women are going to these local meetings all over the country and the degree of control which the union officials have varies. This support for CLUW is not something manipulated from on top but is coming from the real grievances and problems of women at work. One socialist feminist who is in the Teachers Union in New York described the local meeting she had attended with excitement. They are taking up the danger of industrial disease which a manual woman worker in the group faces in her job.

There was general agreement that the radical caucus at the conference, which included socialist feminists as well as socialist women from revolutionary groups, was very confused. The women from women's liberation whose experience of speaking was limited to small groups felt ill-equipped to intervene in a formally organised conference, and that they must be better prepared for the next meeting.

What conflicts are they coming up against?

Legislation, combined with a strong feminist consciousness, is having some effect in the States on women's jobs. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 made it illegal to refuse to hire women. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission acts as a watchdog. Though employers continue to violate this law, by refusing women when they turn up to apply for work and claiming, when challenged, that they don't know the law. The legislation has come through with plenty of strings attached too, abolition of protective legislation for instance. The watchdog is a sleepy one as well. You can fill out your form and wait for a year. Quite what you're meant to do in the meantime is unclear. The most positive effect of these laws has been the restraining effect of the threat they pose to employers. The threat is a real one, because of the efficient organisation of lawyers in the women's movement. The threat of legal action can often end harassment. This legislation is having a small but significant effect on the type of work women do. Big national companies are

What's it like for women doing jobs only men used to do?

mills and driving lorries. It would be starry-eyed to see this kind of work as, in itself, liberatory. It is hard and exhausting. But then, so is a good deal of 'women's work'. In these male jobs women enter a militant union situation and the pay is very high, but they also have to cope with the men's suspicions and attitudes.

An ex-hospital secretary and teacher called Ann in Cleveland, Ohio, has been working as a teamster - driving a medium sized lorry for several months. She described the disadvantages and advantages of this kind of work. At first, she was pressurised to do night work by her employer. She could have managed a night shift, but if she did it might rebound on a divorced woman working there who had children. Ann went to a feminist lawyer and the employer gave in to the legal pressure very quickly.



Ann who works as a teamster in Cleveland, Ohio.

She finds the work hard because of the long hours due to enforced overtime. She goes off at 8 o'clock and isn't back sometimes until 8.30 at night. These hours are particularly difficult for women with children. Ann loads and unloads her own truck, delivering nuts and bolts and small parts to factories, businesses and shops. She doesn't find them very heavy but says she's lost 20 lbs in weight and her flab has turned to muscle. The best thing about the job is the pay. She is making more than she did in white collar women's jobs. After tax she takes home 200 dollars - about £80 a week - which even by American standards is a good wage.

Her appearance sweating away with her uniform and her nuts and bolts causes a bit of a stir among the stylishly dressed young women working as receptionists and secretaries. Most of them pity her until they find out how much

she gets an hour. Some women went off to become teamsters after talking to her. Another receptionist raises her fist when Ann delivers and says, 'Women's lib! Yeah, here she comes.' Simply seeing another woman doing a job like this and earning good money makes women question a lot of things about feminine stereotypes and low pay being somehow natural and inevitable.

Ann said that some people in the movement ask whether it's worth it. They think women should only organise in predominantly female jobs like the garment industry. She points out, 'There are more and more women coming into this job. We need to develop women who can fight and help organise other women. So that the experience you get working in a situation where you are forced to be very tough and aggressive is important. All the women who try and get this job are very tough and a lot of them are single and raising children themselves. They're all such fighters. They have to be. It's coming at you all directions, the employers, the union's bureaucracy and some of the older men truck drivers.'

The younger men accepted her more readily, though with much banter about women drivers and whether she wore a bra. Most important was support from the other women whose respect she won with the victory over night work. She had conflict, though, with one of the male officials. As soon as he saw her in her truck, he said, 'If you girls think you can handle a man's job, you'll have to go by the book. And don't you give me any of this women's equality, women's lib garbage.' She hadn't said a word! At her first union meeting she found herself in a different dilemma. One chairman, ruling with an iron fist used her presence to silence militancy and objections from the floor. 'There's a lady present, watch your language', he roared. Ann heard from another teamster union woman that the same tactic was used when she attended a meeting.

This unwanted chivalry goes with the teamster macho cigar smoking image. In taking on the teamsters, women like Ann are fighting the extreme of American corrupt unions, with a leadership which is opposed to the rank and file, is sexist, racist and Nixonite. They handle dissent by beating people up. Ann says, 'They'd be willing to beat women up. But boy oh boy, will they look bad. Believe me, these women will be shaking up the teamsters.' ●



Women strikers in San Francisco discussing the issues with a teamster, who decides not to drive his truck across their picket line.

Photo by Cathy Cade



Cecilia Vicuña, painter and poet, is a Chilean stranded in London by the coup. She traces her own development, as well as the cultural development of her people, in the context of the history of Chile. She describes the extraordinary blossoming of creativity which occurred during the Allende government, only to be destroyed by the military coup of September 1973.

Cecilia is working with Artists for Democracy who are organising a Festival for the Chilean Resistance with an exhibition and auction at the Royal College of Art in London from October 14 - November 1

When the Spanish came to Chile in the 16th century they found a nation inhabited by different groups of people, in different stages of development, but most were under the cultural and political domination of the Incas who had conquered Chile 70 years earlier. This made it easier for the Spanish to advance up to the River Bio Bio in the south which marked the end of the Inca's domination. Beyond this river the Mapuche people, a matriarchal society slowly becoming patriarchal, opposed the Spanish with a strong and organised resistance which lasted for almost 4 centuries. It was this war and the slow intermingling of the races and cultures co-existing in the country which formed our nationality. At the beginning of the 19th century the Chileans fought the war of independence against the Spanish, and became a so-called "independent and democratic" nation. Our democratic history lasted, with sporadic interruptions in the 1890's and 1930's, until the assassination of our President Salvador Allende in September 1973.

During this time Chilean women were producing different sorts of creative work, according to the social class they belonged to. The lower middle class and the working class were formed mainly of Indians and Criollos (Spanish ancestry but born in Chile). Traditionally it was the Mapuche women who did the weaving, the pottery and the basket making. Elements of their original matriarchal organisation persisted, (they had been conquered by a patriarchal tribe from across the Andes) and the women did half the agricultural work and played an important part

in their religion as the Machi (medicine woman or shaman). Throughout the colonial war, and the war of independence they continued to produce craft work of a high quality and a strong character for practical and ritual purposes, but all this work was unappreciated and downgraded by the invaders. The Criollo women very often learnt how to weave, do ceramics and basket making from their Indian sisters. And, as the Catholic church badly needed ritual objects for the churches, and to be used in commerce, they encouraged the formation of craft workshops. The influence of these workshops (which produced imitations of Spanish religious art) together with the Criollo way of transforming the Indian craft work, led to the birth of the Popular Arts, which are even today a field of expression for working and lower middle class women. Although, in the last 10 years, as these Popular Arts have become an important economic activity, men have started to take them up, and now there are entire towns like



A Mapuche woman weaving

Rari or Pomaire where everybody does pottery or weaving for a living.

The upper middle classes and the upper class were formed mainly of people of Spanish origin with a strong patriarchal and machista culture. The women were merely the childbearers with no other responsibilities or rights. Their education consisted of religious instruction and domestic work, which sometimes developed into home industries. In the 19th century when the news of the feminist agitation in Europe and the U.S.A. reached Chile, these women began to demand better education together with other rights. The first women artists came out of this class, but their work, like that of contemporary male artists, was a shallow imitation of the European official art of the time. By the beginning of the 20th century there were more women artists; painters, sculptors and poets like Gabriela Mistral - but still comparatively very few.

My grandmother, daughter of a sculptor and sister to philosophers, was born in 1900 and typically had to give up sculpture to take care of the children. But two of her daughters did become sculptors. She had learnt to work with clay from her father, and her daughter learnt from her and from Indian women "loceras" living in the same zone.

In the generation born around the 20's there was a larger number of artists; some of them went to the National Fine Art School in Santiago and became involved in different groups of revolutionary and anti-fascist artists during the 40's and 50's.

My aunts belonged to this generation, and although their work was aesthetically very good it did not reflect our Chilean "reality".

However, I always appreciated the fact that they educated us to become artists and independent women. I was writing before I knew the alphabet, and painting and dancing at the age of three. Out of the 8 women cousins, one became a philosopher, one an actress and four of them became writers and painters. But my generation rejected their elitist concept of art as a purely aesthetic phenomena separated from social and political life. My cousins revealed socialism and the Cuban revolution to me when I was 12. Later on, in 1964, together we designed and painted a street mural for the Allende Campaign. We were still at school.

In the sixties there was a growing political awareness in Chile; in 1964 Allende lost the election by only 40,000 votes.

By that time I had started writing regularly in the streets of Santiago; political slogans and poetic campaigns. I contributed to student magazines; wrote poetry and essays; did some manifestos and events; and started painting with oil and acrylic.

Artists had organised collective workshops, open exhibitions, concerts and arts fairs in the parks where artists and artisans exhibited together. Slowly the attitude towards the Popular Arts and the Indian Crafts began to change, and the ceramics of the *loceras*, the peasant women who had been working anonymously, began to be appreciated. It was through Violeta Parra, a pioneer in the "discovery" and diffusion of such work, that the value of our own culture was revealed to us. She herself, a working class woman, collected and recorded folk songs, wrote songs and poetry, sang and sewed tapestries.

When I went to Art school (1966 - 1971) half of my teachers and more than half of the students were women. This seemed to me the natural development of the combination of the traditional role of women in the Indian culture, proving its influence in our society, and the result of the long struggle for women's liberation in the rest of the world. At that time I was disenchanted by our (Allende's) defeat in the elections and spent a number of years isolated in my studio, concentrating only on my work, thus missing extraordinary events in my art school. (reform at the university, participation in political organisations, etc.) I think of it as a period when my class origin showed up, not letting me be part of the people. In 1969 I made a trip to the U.S.A. to help translate my first book of poetry, and there I began to think again in political terms. The first political work I did then was a painting for the Black Panther party.

In Chile, during the Christian Democrats period, discontent and political organisations continued to develop and by 1970 the movement was mature enough to produce the gathering of left wing parties in the Popular Unity. In art and culture the conditions were also ripe for change. Salvador Allende was elected as the candidate of the Popular Unity for the Presidency. Brigades of boys and girls from the Communist party spontaneously decided to paint slogans in the streets of Santiago, which later developed into mural paintings. Afterwards brigades painted murals all over Chile. The artists created an organisation called "Art for Everyone" which put on open exhibitions, poetry readings, and performed dances and plays in parks and other places as part of the Campaign. After Allende was elected president in September 1970, both the brigades and "Art for Everyone" continued to grow, "to celebrate and defend our triumph".

"My painting was affected by all this joy, I painted people painting on the walls, revolutionary women's rallies, rallies for Salvador Allende. Later on I started a series of *Heroes of the Revolution: Marx, Lenin, Allende and Fidel, Violeta Parra.*

During the 3 years of Popular Unity cultural policy developed from the grass roots as cultural workers and artists found different ways to cope with the people's real need for cultural identity and self expression. Their achievements deserve much more than a few notes.

The National Plan for Applied Arts was created; to raise the standard of living of the artisans; to encourage the knowledge and the

arts of medicinal herbs, poetry or weaving. Wise people in spite of the conditions of extreme misery in which they live.

Artists together with other workers created within the National Organisation of Trade Unions the project for Centres of Popular Culture, which began to be organised in nationalised industries, mines, centres for agrarian reform, schools etc. These centres aimed to eliminate illiteracy; to fight against alcoholism; to teach hygiene; to explain union legislation; and to organise art workshops, theatre groups, bands, libraries and cinemas, etc.

This is how an art workshop was organised: an instructor, usually a young artist, came to the Centre of Popular Culture and put on



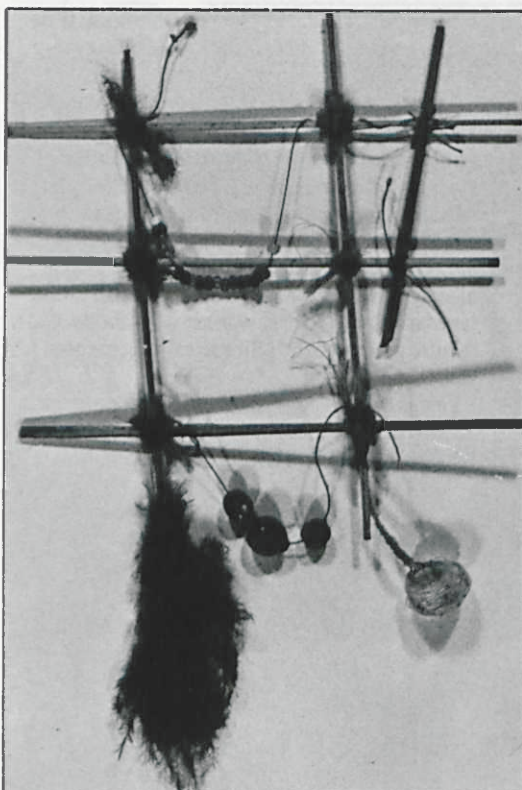
Violeta Parra by Cecilia Vicuña

consumption of crafts by the people; to increase the production of crafts and to export some of it. "Pioneers" were sent all over the country to look for artisans. They encouraged them to organise unions and workshops; to avoid the exploitation of the middleman; to triple the price of their product enabling them to live in better conditions; and to defend their vision and feeling for what their art should be against the influence of buyers who try to make them imitate industrial patterns.

Many of my friends became "pioneers". They were paid by the Ministry of Agriculture and had to go to virgin lands and forests, where there were no roads and where very few women had ever travelled. Riding horses for days, they met extraordinary old Indian women; masters in the

lectures, films and discussions. Once the people were interested the instructor organised an 8 month course in painting technique, sculpture and the applied arts. After that an instructor emerged from the group of workers and continued to lead the workshop. The course naturally varied according to the place, the conditions and requirements of the people, and it was meant to create concern with ideas of solidarity as opposed to those of competition and individualism.

One of my cousins together with her boyfriend organised a theatre group called New Popular Theatre, in conjunction with the Technical University and the National Organization of Trade Unions. They had a piece about events which happened during the nationalisation of



Works included in "a journal of objects for the Chilean resistance". I decided to make an object everyday in support of the Chilean revolutionary process. Today the objects are intended to support resistance against the dictatorship. As I am a woman with no nation, they have to be very small in order to travel with me. Their poverty is their socialist character (they can be done by anyone). They are very precarious, they can't endure and fall apart by themselves.

the textile industry. They went to the factory and rehearsed in front of the workers, asking them to participate. They performed a scene and stopped to ask, "How did things really happen?" "What corrections would you propose?" In the beginning people were shy and reluctant to talk, but they became more and more involved and in the end changed the text completely.

Performances always ended up as political meetings. Afterwards they would encourage the people to create their own theatre group, and one of them stayed with the workers for a number of months, until the group was fairly organised. My cousin encountered women in little mining towns in the mountains who called their men "machista" (male chauvinist) and demanded more participation in village life.

Other important events were the festivals of popular poetry (payadores), of new Chilean songs, and worker's theatre. And "El Tren de la Cultura"; mobile cultural units which travelled all across the country with musicians, poets and painters.

During those years I was writing T.V. plays for children with a group of friends. The subject was usually class struggle in the form of a tale about the search for a new heart, which would not allow any more exploitation of any sort or reactionary violence. We asked the children to send us letters and drawings explaining how they thought the new heart should be. We received dozens of letters and we wrote plays based on them so that the children would see their drawings becoming stages and their letters becoming plays.

In the middle of this joyful activity I got a



Self portrait by Cecilia Vicuña

scholarship to study in England and came here. Immediately my painting became dark and crooked. I suffered very much because I realised that the decision to come to Europe instead of participating fully in the revolutionary process showed how culturally colonised I was, in spite of being leftist all my life. I think it was a class problem. As I belonged to the upper middle classes it took me a long time to realize that to be leftist was not enough. I only understood completely when I came to England and was shocked by the effect so many years of capitalism have had on the soul of the people, their daily life and culture.

When I was preparing to go back with a book I had done in England, my poems, paintings and the project of forming a brigade of women painters - Violeta Vid (from Violeta Parra) - to go all round the country painting murals about the history of women and their incorporation into the revolutionary process, the coup came to kill what I loved and to keep me apart from what I had just discovered as my only source of energy and life; the class struggle in my own country.

Since then my life in England became a dark nightmare. During the first three months it was difficult to know what was really happening. But as news of the repression became clearer and

I started to learn about the deaths of the people I loved, about the concentration camps, the torture and the killings, the junta's actions struck me as a personal coup.

At the same time my scholarship finished, I was asked to leave the place where I was living and my visa came to an end. Different people helped me but my lack of experience, my doubts and my inability to see myself as a refugee were all hinderances. I would like to go South America but political problems and the immense number of other Chilean refugees make it impossible for the time being.

During this time I have been working for the solidarity movement - in fact I think most Chileans are now working for the broad anti-fascist front. Repression has a dialectic, like everything else, and the more the junta tries to suppress us the stronger will be our response.

We have good reason to believe that this time we will overcome, and as Allende said, "We'll come back!"

The address for the Chile Solidarity Campaign is: 129 Seven Sisters Road, London.

Artists for Democracy, c/o Sudio International, 14 West Central St., W.1

BOOKS

Woman, Culture and Society
 Edited by
 Michelle Z Rosaldo
 & Louise Lanphere
 Oxford £7.25,
 paperback £2.30

"Unfortunately, the evidence from proper field-work in other cultures suggests that women are subordinated in most spheres of life. Anthropology is not a good leg for liberated women to stand on." At last the sixteen women anthropologists who contributed to *Woman, Culture and Society* have managed to demolish this view.

They've shown that anthropology does more than merely examine exotic subject matter; it asks different questions about social facts. With academic rigour and sound feminist purpose they have produced an inspiring book which shows that the cross-cultural analysis of woman's position, be it weak or strong, raises issues that are very re-



An Mbuti father lovingly holds his child. The Mbuti band of 20 to 30 members is the focus of all activity; domestic and public spheres are merged. Daily tasks are shared in this egalitarian hunting and gathering society with the contribution of both sexes being equally valued.



Drab black dress, a strong ethic of purity and denial of sexuality are devices used by these Greek peasant women to maintain their separateness and, therefore, independence from the world of men. As champions of traditional morality, their gossip is feared by all men who value their "honour". Far from being an idle occupation, gossip enables women to lead public opinion and to influence both domestic and village affairs.

levant to everyone who's working towards equality for women in our own society.

Rosaldo and Lanphere clearly indicate that anthropologists do not support the argument for matriarchy yet they recognise that shaky evolutionary hypotheses, tales of amazons and matriarchates, have served a purpose in encouraging us to imagine a world in which women have real power. They begin with an acceptance of male dominance as a universal fact of human

social organisation. Even in societies where women occupy a culturally central position and wield much domestic and economic power, men's activities are usually valued above those of women. Women's power is rarely legitimized or even overtly recognised by men.

Sherry Ortner, in a paper entitled "Is female to male as nature is to culture?", asks what could there be in the generalized stereotypes and conditions of existence, common to every culture,

that would lend every culture to place a lower value upon women? In all societies, she argues, there is an awareness of the fundamental division between nature and culture. Women's bodily functions of childbirth, lactation and menstruation are observable features of daily life in many societies. Woman is, therefore, seen as being closer to nature than man. Similarly, her social position within the domestic group as the caretaker and socializer of, not yet quite human, children places her conceptually closer to nature than to culture.

That women are responsible for the raising of children is seen to have tremendous consequences for both male and female psychology. For the female child, development and acquisition of gender identity may be painful but is considered to be less problematic than for boys because the constant presence of women within the domestic group ensures adequate models for emulation. The male child must learn his role from an absent father and tends to experience manhood as a set of formal rights and duties as opposed to the highly personal, relatively immediate commitment recognised as part of female's psychic structure. In this sense too women's personal attachments are set apart from the structured organisation of a culture. Women are often seen to be challenging group solidarity with their individual loyalties. There is an overwhelming sense of ambiguity in woman's position; not only does she ignore (subvert) social categories but she also represents at the other extreme, the religious ideal of unconditional love. She is aligned with nature and yet she is the culture bearer, the socializer of children and the one who transforms the raw into the cooked. She is the witch and the goddess, the whore and the vir-

gin. At the same time woman is beneath and transcends culture. Her position on the cultural periphery makes it possible for woman to be beneath and transcend culture simultaneously.

"Various aspects of woman's situation (physical, social and psychological) contribute to her being seen closer to nature, while the view of her as closer to nature is in turn embodied in institutional forms that reproduce her situation. The implications for social change are similarly circular: a different cultural view can only grow out of a different social actuality; a different social actuality can only grow out of a different cultural view." Such pessimistic views on the complexity of the situation are not, however, characteristic of the book. Female subordination is seen to be a product of culture, not of nature, and, therefore, can be changed: "Change must proceed in two directions. To begin, it would seem imperative to integrate men into the domestic sphere, giving them an opportunity to share in the socialization of children as well as in the more mundane tasks. What is more, the cross-cultural evidence of the importance of female participation in, and control of, the products of economic production indicates that woman's status will be elevated only when they participate equally with men in the public field of work."

An adequate balance is achieved in the book between such generalized observations and more particular studies undertaken during the authors' fieldwork. Constant themes are women's economic roles, their relationship to status and the division between the domestic and public spheres of life.

Ethnographic example lends solid support to our insistence that men become involved in routine childcare. Societies which do not exaggerate the

differences between male and female roles are the ones which place positive value upon the involvement of both male and female in the home; they are most egalitarian in terms of sex roles. Development into manhood often involves the removal of young boys from the domestic world of women. Most initiation rites involve ritual snatching of the boy from his mother. Distancing permits man to manipulate his social environment. When a man is involved in domestic work, in cleaning the shit, he cannot establish an aura of authoritative distance. When public decision are made in the household, then women have a legitimate public role.

"Among the Ilongot (a Philippine society), a man's hunting is more highly valued than the gardening done by women, but the two modes of production are conceived as complementary and the division of labour is not strict. . . . in the house when food is being distributed, women cook and allot rice portions, while men cook, cut, and distribute bits of meat. During the day when women are gardening, men spend long hours with their children, and husband and wife may keep an infant between them while they sleep. . . . there is little in everyday Ilongot life to suggest an asymmetrical relation to the sexes. There are no men's houses or public plazas, nowhere for an independent, ranked, and organized world of men. Most political confrontations take place in the large one-room households; although men may predominate in such contexts, women are rarely forbidden to speak."

Women in societies unlike the Ilongot, where legitimate exercise of power is denied them, may none the less wield great power. Women's tactics which enable them to determine their own and others actions are carefully detailed in a number of papers, they include: gossip, withdrawal of domestic and sexual services, creating women's associations and strong affective bonds with their sons who, as adults, will further their mother's interests the possibilities are many. Men are unwilling to admit the existence of any rationale behind such actions; women's tactics are interpreted as personal quarrels, idiosyncratic behavior, disruptive, disturbed and so on.

In some unequalitarian societies women's power appears to be greater than the men's. Because the male/female, domestic/public dichotomies are great, women have had the opportunity of separate economic and political development. Such women's pose a threat to men who respond by creating a new method of social control: religious and cultural ideologies which re-establish control and authority firmly in their own hands. In such a manner women's contribution to the economy can greatly outweigh men's while men still maintain their dominant position.

Other papers deal with topics that I have barely been able to touch upon: there are more detailed reviews of the relationship between women's contributions to different economies and their social status, and of the effect of different forms of domestic group structure upon woman's position. There's also an analysis of the contribution of Chinese women to society after the Revolution and a review of the function of matriarchal myths in primitive societies.

Woman, Culture and Society is an important book. It is one of the first anthropological books to tackle the universal problem of women's subordination. More than this, by drawing together social, economic and psychological factors, anthropology may be able to provide a melting pot for the ideas that are currently circulating within the women's movement.

Brenda Whisker

Mr. Rabbit and the Lovely Present by Charlotte Zolotow illustrated by Maurice Sendak paperback Puffin 22p

This high-flyer of the booming children's picture book market is the work of two prolific and established U.S.A. artists. Sendak is of course well

known for 'Where the Wild Things Are' and 'In The Night Kitchen'. to be found on every middle-class bookshelf and increasingly filtering through to a working class readership via infant schools and pre-school playgroups. Zolotow is less well known in Britain, but her predominantly didactic children's picture books are well known in the U.S.A. (Of particular interest is her recent 'William's Doll', a laboured tale of a boy wanting a doll and getting it in spite of sexist opposition from everyone.)

Mr. Rabbit and the Lovely Present is interesting. For one thing, it is a nice idea for a child confronted by the familiar dilemma of what to choose for a parent's birthday to consult the local Rabbit and get some good hints. And, the pictures are, just as you might expect from Sendak, alive and atmospheric.

ric. No wonder the pundits are transported into the realms of aesthetic delight! But for us, the romance of the illustrations ignores the detail of the story, which children like to see as well as hear. But this simple fantasy is worth a closer look. Zolotow's little girl who wants help to choose a present turns out to be in Sendak's pictures the well known stereotype of a perplexed and passive female, with little in her head and very good at relying on others. Here, Sendak has given Zolotow's implicit sexism a rich expression, which sits oddly beside his stated concern to avoid sex role stereotyping (see "Among the Wild Things" by Nat Hentoff, in 'Only Connect', ed. by Egoff etc; O.U.P.) But that is not all. Animals can be used in children's stories to provide classless and sexless characters to give universal appeal. Rabbits don't show their sex too readily, but Sendak's Mr. Rabbit is some hell of a male, whose suave and knowing

mannerisms (he's in charge, he has all the answers, he leads the way, when not leaning on her with gross familiarity) are a subtle illustration of the familiar stereotype of the adman's cocky and patronising male rapist.

Andrew Mann of The Children's Books Study Group August 74

Hallo Aurora! By Anne-Cath. Vestly Longman Young Books. £1.50.

A story about a nuclear family which has consciously made some fundamental role-reversals. Mother is a lawyer and drives to work in the city. Father stays at home, studying for his Ph.D., and servicing the family; he looks after baby Socrates and pre-school Aurora.

The story is told from the child's point

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of view; it tells of how she and her family adjust to living in a tenth floor flat in the suburbs, after a house in the city, and how father copes with the domestic role. He braves the mothers at the baby-clinic, copes good-humouredly with the confusion of the supermarket, as well as the reaction of neighbours who find him something of a freak.

Mother and Father are both real people, not the cardboard stereotypes of parents we usually find in children's books. Mother comes home exhausted from work, and Dad gets exasperated with a neighbour who dumps her baby with him to look after.

The relationship between father and daughter is refreshingly unpatronising; he encourages her autonomy while providing support. Most children will identify with her first steps out into this concrete jungle.

This is a useful book to introduce children to (or to reinforce) a different family lifestyle, suitable for reading to children of four or five upwards, or to be read by seven to eleven-year-olds.

If you think that this domestic set-up sounds all too self-consciously 'liberated' to have been written by an English writer, you won't be surprised to know that the author is Norwegian. One wonders how long it will be before writers in this country start to reflect the changing roles that women and men are assuming both within and without the family.

Helen Petit.
(of *CISSY*)

FILM



Faye Dunaway and Jack Nicholson in *Chinatown*

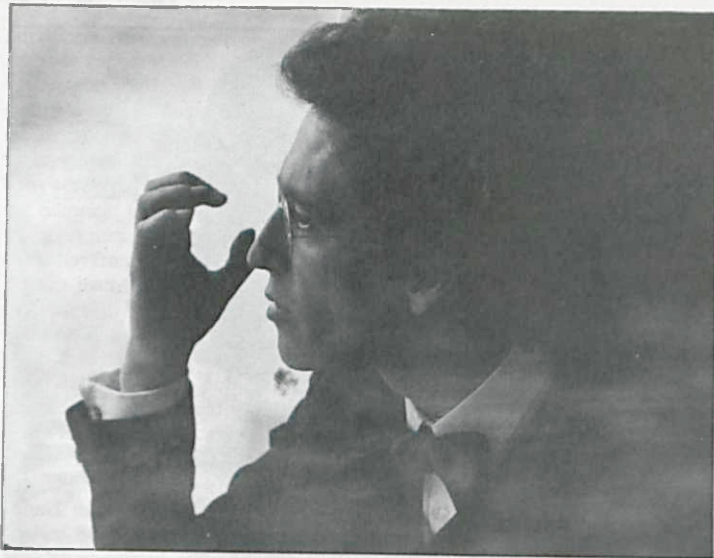
Mahler
Director: Ken Russell
Goodtimes Enterprises

Mahler opens with train jolting across 19th century Europe to Vienna. Tormented Gustav hates crowds but hates petty-minded Alma quite a lot more. He stares out lonesome at the wastes of Elstree film studios while Alma fusses with her soul and prances with a fashion mag.

Scenes from childhood in kosher section of Austro-Hungarian Empire. 7 year old musical genius Gustav gets a shock when he sees his father fucking the maid. Since he thinks he can interpret nature he behaves in appropriately pretentious fashion, but is brought down to size by friendly woodman Ronald Pickup (last seen as discontented revolutionary at the Old Vic) who teases him but at least *cares*. More Elstree to the sounds of the 2nd Symphony plus Teutonic woodcuts of the resurrection.

Gustav struggles to interpret nature some more, this time in small wooden hut on edge of nice lake but interrupted by non-soulful wife in dirndl who gets a shock when her husband writes a piece called *Songs of the Death of Children*. The two daughters now wander through a glade in Victorian lace nightdresses.

Alma, Alma, what made you the helpless mincing woman you are now...? A younger Alma runs, tears, careens through a different glade accompanied by the *Liebestod* from Wagner's *Tristan and Isolde*. The corsetted real world of the sexually uptight contrasts nicely with the next fantasy. Gustav is witnessing his own cre(m)ation while Alma supervises it flanked by a group of ton-up kids masquerading as riders ►



Robert Powell as Mahler

of death. A stripper in seamed stockings and G-string dances on his coffin. Alma transfixed goes off with sexy soldier boy Max.

Death reappears a bit later on also in the form of the last symphony Mahler was to write ("They say a composer's 9th is his last, Gustav"), and a society woman in pearls. By this time Gustav has had enough. He has a minor heart attack on the train but revives in time to persuade Alma to go on loving him. Doesn't she realise that in loving music above all else, he is loving her? Unfortunately he has only a week to live so story can only end with frozen shot of rapturous Gustav.

This ghastly film doesn't get anywhere near its real terrain, the struggle

for patriarchy in an anti-semitic world of urban frippery. It can't help us now to penetrate the velvet aura protecting late 19th century male Viennese creativity because it shows only the appearances of people, not the relationships between them. Alma's petulance at endlessly copying out Gustav's compositions and not being allowed a space of her own is described but not defined. She is allowed to be only a terrestrial version of Goethe's Eternal Feminine whom Mahler set to music in the 8th symphony. She is incorporated into her husband's music because, like nature, she is inspiration. Like nature too she can be mastered. But she can't be for real because nature is also mystery.

Ann Scott

Music

Marlo Thomas and Friends 'Free to be You and Me' Bell Records

The father of Princess Atlanta is very worried. He doesn't know how to choose between his daughter's many suitors.

But Atlanta has her own ideas - she tells her father that she may decide not to marry, and anyway, even if she does marry then she will choose the man.

However, the King decides to hold a race. The winner will receive his daughter's hand in marriage as the prize. Princess Atlanta enters the race also, and the result is a tie between the Princess and Young John, who lives in the town. The King decides to offer the prize of his daughter to Young John but John, who has admired the Princess from afar since they were children, says he couldn't possibly marry her unless she agrees.

Princess Atlanta and Young John spend the afternoon together and become the best of friends. They then go off (separately) to explore the world knowing that they may or may not meet again someday, but whatever happens they will both live happily ever after.

What is unusual about this fairy tale? It is unusual because it is from the record 'Free to be You and Me' by Marlo Thomas and friends, produced by the US magazine Ms.

This is a record of songs, poems and stories 'for children of all ages, shapes, sizes, colours and sexes' featuring The New Seekers, Diana Ross, Harry Belafonte, Carlo Channing, Marlo Thomas - and friends.

In the song 'William's Doll', William wants a doll 'to hug and hold'. Everyone calls him a sissy, and tells him that dolls are for girls. He is offered a basketball, a badminton set, a bag of marbles, a baseball glove and 'all the things a boy would love' but he still wants a doll.

Granny steps in and buys William a doll because, she says:



'William wants a doll
so that when he has a baby someday
He'll know how to dress it,
put diapers on double,
And gently caress it
to bring up a bubble
And care for his baby
as every good father should
learn to do'.

We're not sure whether a doll should in fact be seen as training for parenthood and perhaps Granny was putting her adult ideas into William's head. William wants a doll, not a baby and toys for cuddling and loving should not be seen as appropriate only for girls.

Other numbers on the record include 'Parents are People' which has a very clear message and a catchy tune that children can dance to. 'Housework' is a poem which describes T.V. commercials with their continual references to the happy smiling housewife and goes on to state that housework is dull, dreary and hard and becomes tolerable only when shared by everyone.

There are happy songs, like the title song 'Free to be You and Me' and 'When We Grow Up' and there is the sad tale of what happens to Delilah when Mummy and Daddy both go on holiday and Grandma comes to look after the house.

We played the record to our kids aged between four and nine and they enjoyed it, danced to it and were singing it afterwards. One small boy commented 'They do tell you a lot of things.' To sum up: the record does only depict the liberation of children within middle class society. It ignores many of the obstacles to equality which exists in a working class environment but it does pave the way for others to follow.

This record is not available in England, but you can write to Ms Magazine, 370 Lexington Avenue, New York, New York 10017, USA.

or
Bell Records, 1776 Broadway, New York City, New York 10019, USA. for information on obtaining it.

The Wandsworth Women's Liberation Group.



Carla Bley 'Tropic Appetites' Watt/Virgin £2.45

Carla Bley is a well known composer and as such is highly respected in modern jazz circles but 'Tropic Appetites' is her first work that has had any wide release. Previous works include 'Escalator Over The Hill' and 'A Genuine Tong Funeral' (recorded by vibraphonist Gary Burton on RCA) and though they are much praised,

they're hard to get hold of in Britain.

It was for this reason that Ms Bley and Michael Mantler started the 'Watt' label, which is to be distributed in Britain by Virgin. 'Tropic Appetites' is the first release on Watt and is intended as the first of a series of LP's called 'The Indonesian Collection.' Carla Bley wrote and co-produced the music and plays keyboards, percussion and sings. Among the other eight musicians on the album, two are women - Julie Tippett (formerly Julie Driscoll) whose excellent singing really adds depth and becomes an essential part of the music and Toni Marcus who plays violin and viola. The music is subtle and moody, with a blend of jazz and basic eastern rhythms. Particularly good is 'Enormous Tots' with its creeping insistent rhythm and the blending of Tippett's and Bley's voices as they both sing different words. On other tracks the music becomes very excited and involved, with all the instruments coming together, seemingly falling apart and then magically coming back together - always with the basic rhythm of bass and drums keeping it coherent. The esoteric words by Paul Haines also deserve a mention.

At first this album seemed fragmented but was worth a few plays to get into some really enjoyable music.

Kathryn Brooks

MUSIC NEWS...

Olivia Records, the new feminist record company which has started in America (see music section Spare Rib issue 24) have released their first record. It is a single which is to be used for fund raising purposes, (money is very hard to come by in the women's movement, as we know too well) one side, Meg Christian from Washington sings 'Lady' and the other side Cris Williamson sings 'If It Weren't for the Music'. The record sells for \$1.50 plus postage and bulk rates for five records or more are available on request. Olivia Records are a non-profit corporation and are raising money to buy a recording studio, in order to put records out more cheaply and to use the studio to train women as engineers, musicians, etc. Said Cynthia Gair of Olivia 'We're getting an incredible response and women are sending in donations of a dollar or two, which does add up! The time may come when Spare Rib will be able to make some money by sponsoring a concert of one of the women who records for Olivia. Perhaps enough to ship all eight of us over there for a visit!!!!'

Now that would be amazing, but in the meantime, you can write to Olivia Records at Box 1784, Main City Station, Washington DC 20013, USA.

MF

The multi-million pound empire known as the music business could not have begun to exist without the people who found in themselves a need to create and the people who enjoyed listening. This relationship was seized and exploited beyond all recognition and the situation is now the reverse. The accumulated power of the industry can determine the success or failure of a musician by placing upon them such complex demands that few can remain in touch with their original needs for creativity.

Bridget St. John has remained sensitive to what she believes are the roots of her music. She has managed to avoid labelling and image with the help of people like John Peel, on whose record label Dandelion (which was eventually forced to close by commercial pressures) she brought out three albums.

The development of her music, from simply accompanying herself on guitar to her recent, more adventurous album 'Jumblequeen' released through her new record company Chrysalis, shows growth, over which she is in control. This achievement prompted us to begin by talking about one controlling influence in a musician's life, the music press.

BRIDGET ST. JOHN



'Watching the music papers and watching them build someone, you can see them pick up on someone for whatever reason - maybe it's a good publicist or whatever and then there comes a point where they say, 'Oh, it's all falling to pieces, he's going to the dogs'. It's almost like they take a delight in seeing them fall down again. They started that with David Bowie but because he came up with this theatre thing, he's just so much stronger than them, but they do it to a lot of people. I did his Arts Lab when he was just a shy guy sitting playing the guitar but it was the whole thing of image, he had no image then and the papers didn't want to know him, so I don't blame him for not speaking to them now. Their attitude is that they get to know you if you can do something for them because you are a bit important, that's what I hate.

Another thing I feel is that the writers are becoming the stars and that frightens me so

much because they're trying to put themselves above you all the time, like you should be interviewing them instead of the other way round. In music there are people like that, who are writing songs to make money, rather than having something to say. Yet that's one thing I get criticised for, I write because I need to say the things that are inside me but they're not commercial, it's not making people money.

Well, about two years ago when Dandelion finished, I was told I would really have to compromise to 'make it' because obviously what I was doing wasn't making money. I was making a living from it, it wasn't that side of it but I wasn't selling a lot of records, I wasn't getting hit records. So they told me I would have to compromise and to me that meant listening to Radio One, looking over my shoulder, picking up little bits of people's songs, putting them together and hoping it was a hit. But then how would I feel when I'm fifty ▶

Women
in
Music

Marion Fudger

and I've done all these silly little things, so I've made a fortune – maybe – but I'd feel really empty inside, I've put out all this shit just to make money, you can't do that. You do want more people to hear what you do and that involves selling records but record companies say that the way to sell more records is to change what you do. I'm lucky, Chrysalis aren't like that with me at all and Dandelion weren't either.

People want to hear that if you're doing well, that you did it all on your own and some people will say that they did, they forget their roots so easily but it's not like 'Little girl lost makes good' you can't do it on your own, you know you can't. In a sense, everyone who's bought your magazine has helped you and everyone who has bought my record has helped. If no one bought my records, I would never have another recording contract now, so they've all helped, everybody helps a bit.'

One thing that worries me about recording contracts is that you have to agree to bring out a certain number of records per year.

'Well it isn't that bad actually, they have to have that on paper otherwise there would be nothing to hold you there. What it is, is if I had five year deal, I'm supposed to bring out an album a year but if I only bring out two albums in five years, then my contract goes on until I've done the three albums I owe them – if they want me that is.

I used to really worry, I'd think that my whole career would be over if I hadn't written anything for six months but now I learn what those periods are, I know the periods when I'm not going to write so I just listen a lot. I take in things and maybe jot down little ideas of things that are happening or write things that I know aren't good, but still write them just to get them down. I know the time will come when all those things that have gone inside will start coming out again. It's like there's a little factory in there working away at the ideas that you feed in and eventually those things come out.

Some of the things I wrote are awful, I always used to write poems, my first poem was double-dutch, it just went 'dissen dusson dissen doo, sunday vaunday lover too.' I was about two and a half when I said that in the bath, I can remember sitting there feeling really pleased because it's just nice sounds. I certainly remember writing a lot really from when I changed schools at twelve because I was so unhappy at school. The two things I used to do an awful lot were talk to my cat, I had this lovely big cat called Peter, I thought he was the only person that understood me and I wrote a lot. Those poems are really desperate but they're very important too, because I think that if I hadn't had that release, I don't know what I would be like. It was like talking. Embroidery or cooking must be the same sort of release, if that's what you like doing but people don't understand that. I've got this really good friend and she says she's no good at anything but she is an amazing cook and to me that's a creative thing, It's more than tastes, it's colours and arrangements and what courses go with what courses but because everybody has to eat, they think it's nothing, it's the same with sewing.

When it comes to singing, I think a lot of people hear records or read record reviews and say 'Well I can't do it like that so therefore I can't do it.' I think there's probably a whole music thing going on that's really exciting but nobody knows about it, it's not publicised.

There are so many talented people I've met that I know are doing things that people haven't heard about, I haven't met as many women but that doesn't mean anything, that's just where I've been.

I think Fanny were important but it was a bit like copying mens' music, well the bits I heard, I didn't hear it all. The thing I thought was that if Fanny could play like that, then it would have been nice if they could have written their own things rather than copy things very well, note for note, only proving that they could do it as well but not proving anything new at all.

What seems to happen is that women are commercialised before they've worked out anything new for themselves, but if a guy does it, it doesn't kick back like that, people don't turn around and sneer. I feel that's why Dandelion were very important to me and that's why on the credits of this album, I've just put 'With thanks to Dandelion for time to grow' because I feel I've made a load of mistakes and I feel almost like I've just begun to learn how to write and play and I can see it going on for years, this growth. But if I'd had some huge record company, they wouldn't have taken into account that you need to grow and learn things and it's bound to take time.

The first thing I ever did was 'Night Ride' for John Peel when he had that programme, that was before I'd done a gig at all, apart from college gigs. John Peel was like a big umbrella somehow, he's just such a good man, that's the only words I can say for him really and there are very few good men. I was at Sheffield University, I just started teaching myself the guitar and wanting to play to people but not really having anything much to offer but I still

wanted to do it. The very first thing I did was in a theatre group there, they had a revue on every Christmas and they told me to get up and sing a song between sketches, so I just sang one song. I got a note the next day asking me to play at this folk club and I thought I'd hit the big time, it really went to my head. I didn't realise that you're supposed to do an hour set, I only had four songs then that I'd written, well I'd written three and I did a Buffy St. Marie song.

When I was at school, I really hated my second school, I'd say to myself 'I'm gonna be famous one day' and in a way it was like wanting to get my own back on them. It wasn't like I wanted to be famous for myself, I just knew that something I would do would just lift me above all of them and I don't mean that in a sort of arrogant way, I just meant that it would lift me out of that school situation. It all seemed so petty and silly and the mistresses all tied to rules, all very related to academic success not to what people were as people. I was popular but I think that was because I was very naughty and breaking rules and people are always attracted to people like that. I've got two sisters, one older and one younger but I'm not really very like them, in fact one was head girl at this school.

I live on my own now because my old man and I split up and that's why a lot of my songs were very lonely. Some of those songs on 'Jumblequeen' are a year and a half old, well two or three are anyway.

I didn't actually think I wanted to be on my own, it was just something that happened, I just learned to cope with the situation. I didn't want to run to anyone else, if anything, I wanted to run back to where I'd come from. I was always frightened to go anywhere on my own, when I was with my old man, he would



say, 'you really ought to go away somewhere on your own for the weekend.' I was always so frustrated, I was never being quite true to what was inside me, I didn't feel he was pushing me away, I agreed with him but I never had the courage to do it. You need the time and space to think about who you are because otherwise you pick things up. . . . it's like you're being a person by picking up bits of other people all the time and never quite being you. You need exchange all the time but there mustn't be any swamping, otherwise you find yourself accepting things without question, without thinking whether or not you really believe it.

So I've been living on my own for about a year and a half, my old man and I are getting closer again now, but I feel very good that I had that time, because I feel strong now and I know a lot more about myself. I would never say to someone, you've got to do it, but if you feel you need to, then you should. I've known Nigel now for nearly seven years and we were living together for about eighteen months before we split but we were always very close. But you can still be very close to someone but you don't have to have this horrible sort of neurotic relationship, very possessive. There's so many people feel that if someone isn't with them all the time then their whole relationship has gone, but everything should be so much stronger than that, on a much higher level but it's hard to get there.

Another thing that's good about living alone is that you learn how you work as a person and if there's something you don't like, then you've got the space to change it. I suddenly realised that when I was at school I'd be thinking there's only three more weeks to end of term and then I'd be able to do all the things I wanted to do, but then the holidays would come and I never did those things so I'd feel awful going back to school. All my life I've been like that, when I left college I thought the same but I never did the things. Like when I did gigs, I'd just fill in time between them, just waiting for the next one to come, not using the time at all.

To live for today is a horrible cliché but it's a fantastic way to live if you can do it, it doesn't work for me all the time, I feel I'm only just getting back to that now, I go through periods where I'm a bit scattered somehow, you know, there's pieces of me in everything but I'm not doing what I want to do or living how I feel good.

I learnt from being alone that if I didn't start doing things that I was going to do tomorrow now, then I never would, and I thought that every year I'm a bit older and it's not that age worries me but I thought that the older you get and the longer you leave things that you're going to do, the less likely you are to do them. Putting things off becomes a habit. It's not just with music either, it's like my body too, all my life I've been saying that I don't want to eat rubbish but I keep slipping and I dislike myself for going back on principles that are important to me. But I must stop saying I want to do things like yoga for instance, I have to actually do it and then you get the strength to go on to other things. It's bound to take time. I've had 27 years of laziness, well perhaps not laziness, there's a thing in a Joni Mitchell song about living on nerves and feelings and some thing about a lazy mind, it's like that I think.

I don't think playing is self-indulgent because if you don't do something that satisfies you then you're not going to have anything to give to anyone else anyway because after a



time you feel empty and you've nothing to draw on anymore. I just think there's a balance to everything. You can't give everything of you to the people that you're trying to help, people have to help themselves to a certain extent. I could say I've got to stop playing music because, well like my sister is a doctor who has just qualified in Whitechapel and that is an area of London that scares me more than any other because there's so many derelict people. I went to see her and I came back in a car and I saw this guy just sitting on the pavement holding a crutch and his whole hand was gashed and bloody and he was peeing himself, and everyone was walking by and I thought I haven't got the strength to do anything, I don't know what to do, I don't know how to help him. I thought how can I sit there singing when there's all these people and yet I know that I can't help them unless. . . . well, I can't help them immediately. And I said to my sister, why can't I do something for them and she said that there's very little you can do, they come to hospital and get patched up but the basic problem is so much bigger than the fact that they're incontinent or they've gashed their hand. It goes back so many years, that you're not qualified to help them. A little help is worse than no help at all, it just builds up hopes, you have to learn what you do well and do it.

I get lovely letters from people saying how much I've given them through my music, so I must look at that as being important. There was a guy from Bristol wrote to me, he was so mixed up, he's still at school and goes to a psychiatrist and is so depressed. So I can help him by telling him how I see his situation from what he's written to me, and try to help him through a letter, so that's someone I've got direct contact with who knows a bit about me through my music and feels he can trust me, to talk to me. That's partly why I wanted to move out of London so that I could get direct contact with people instead of this thing where everyone's closed off and you don't really get to know anybody - so you can't help them at all. But living in the village, although I don't know a lot of them very well, I know them well enough to, say, run someone to the shops if they need to go, because I've got a car and they haven't. And that's positive, just like dedicating your life to a cause. You have to start from a little thing and build out, but it

still hurts to see decrepit people around.

Like in music now, it's getting more and more like every man for himself, people cashing in on whatever boom is there at the time, they probably wouldn't understand what they were doing, they don't seem to see it like that. I would love it to explode but I don't know that it will, I feel that all the businessmen are so in control of it now, they've got every little angle sussed-out, and it's the artists that haven't got it sussed-out at all. Every so often you realise how things are going, how everything is tightening up and getting slicker. In a sense that's why you need a manager, he's like a bridge between your side of things and the business side of things, you need someone who knows all the games that are going on because you aren't going to get told them, no one is particularly honest to you. I'm still at the stage where I trust people which is a mistake, I don't think it is a mistake in general but it's naive considering I've been in this business six years.

I think a lot of people have lost patience with me because I won't be told what songs to sing or what clothes to wear and it's a good job they have, it makes everything slower but it doesn't matter to me about that. I believe in myself enough to go on creating how I need to create, because I just know that money can't be the big thing at the end of the lane.

Sometimes you do fall for the kind of flattery that you get, I know that when Leo Lyons was interested in producing me, I immediately thought Leo Lyons/Ten Years After they're very famous, maybe some of that will reflect on me and after about a day I was disgusted that I felt like that. So I asked a few people and they said, 'Christ, their music is nothing to do with yours.' And I realised that I didn't know their music at all. So I came to the point of balance and I weighed up the very shiny things against the sort of matt things and decided to meet him before I decided. When I met him he was an amazing man, to me, he's the same sort of person as John Peel, very honest and very good, so then all those things of their music and their reputation, just fell away anyway, and everything got back to being honest again.

It's important to talk to the guy who's gonna look after your songs and you have to trust him first of all. I tried to produce my own songs on the last album, but looking back I don't think it >

was very good. To know how to record takes a lot of learning, and I think that there were some nice bits but other bits were unsatisfying and you need someone to be objective to see how the whole thing is going. It's difficult if you're involved in something to step back and look at it all, you just get carried away. But I'm learning a bit more now.

It's hard to communicate to people through songs in a way that is true to me and yet people can still understand. It's not that you haven't got something to communicate to them it's more that you're talking on another level and they haven't learnt the words, and you have to learn that in music. That's what I want to learn more in writing, communication, and in music too so that it's a link to the writing.

Interviews are funny in the journalist way, it's a bit like school when you're told to do an introduction and the last sentence of the introduction has to link to the next thing, it's stilted somehow, all questions written down. I feel less and less people are doing interviews with people they're really interested in, they've just been rung up and asked to do it and I'm always very aware that when someone comes to interview me that they're doing it as a job and someone has had to persuade them to do it. You can tell when a PR man has been at work because in one week all the music papers will have front page or huge articles about so and so and it all seems so dishonest somehow to do things like that. I'm sure that's why interviews don't sound right because the person hasn't really been involved in what they're doing. I'd like to interview maybe one or two people but I know I couldn't do an interview every week.

It's all wrong, there are loads of good musicians having to do other jobs to make a living and yet there are all these people who are riding on the backs of other people. There are some who have the attitude 'well I've got three years of life in the music business so I wanna clean up.' But what happens in three years time when they've stopped, what are they left with? They may have loads of money, but nothing inside them. It's very important to me to build my whole life not just my so called 'music career.' I suppose people don't or can't associate their work with their life, because a lot of people don't like what they do, in fact they probably hate it but it earns the money. It is a very unique position to be in where the two are part of each other and they're both good, I know that's lucky, it just amazes me how lucky I am that I am able to do it.

It's frightening to think that if someone did an interview with a commercial glitter figure and they admitted that they would get as much as they could out of it all, they wouldn't become any the less popular for that. I read something about Garry Glitter in the Sunday Times and I couldn't believe that someone can live how he lives, like he has thirty-two people in his entourage, someone to hand him a glass of wine, people to do everything for him, it's more than spoilt, it's dead, you're sitting there like a robot 'lift my right arm up, I want to drink.' I can't understand what's inside him to let himself put up with that. I mean if I had loads of money, say suddenly I had a hit record and I was selling out the Rainbow or something then obviously more people would become involved with me but I couldn't let it change the way I lived. . . . But maybe it happens without you realising. Everything is really out of control, it's awful. I'm not unhappy though, things still feel like they're growing so that's the main thing○



Dear Spare Rib,

I don't know if you read the story of Mrs Nara Wells of Tooting, London in the daily papers last month. Mrs Wells is a 45 year old housewife whose husband had left, her only daughter married and emigrated and she was facing eviction. She was undergoing treatment for acute depression and became obsessed with babies. She bought a doll, pushed it around in a pram, washed nappies for it and lavished attention on it.

Eventually, of course, she tried to 'snatch' a baby from outside a shop but succeeded only in pushing the pram a little way down the street before she was stopped and arrested. One would expect then that she was taken into a psychiatric hospital and given help but not so. In June she

appeared in court and although social workers pleaded for her, the judge announced that she was a 'monster of her sex' and a 'menace to society' and must be locked away. He jailed her for 18 months, adding that he did not think that she needed any sort of hospital treatment.

My husband who is a teacher, sings in folk clubs in his spare time and we wrote this song about Mrs Wells in the hope that when he sings it, people might get some idea of the kind of justice a mentally ill woman can expect in this society - and decided to do something about it. Anyway thought you might be interested in reading the song.

Yours truly
Lynne Langley
Barton-upon-Humber
South Humberside.



Mrs. Wells

*Only 45 years old and life already done
her husband found another love and very soon was gone
3 years ago the bells rang out her daughters wedding day
but she's gone to Australia, and that's a long long way.*

*Cleaning empty offices at 6 o'clock each day
returning to an empty house with hardly any pay
lonely days turn into nights and months turn into years
and dreams become reality behind a mask of tears.*

*All the while her body ached for times that used to be
a smiling husband by her side, a baby on her knee
one day she bought a Woolworths doll in a pretty dress of red
she hurried home and washed its face and tucked it up in bed.*

*The doll became alive for her, became her daughter dear
now the days were filled with joy and not with endless fear
the doctor who once tried to help she no longer went to see
she had this love, she had this child to bounce upon her knee.*

*Outside a grocers shop one day just as she hurried by
she saw a baby in a pram and heard him start to cry
she saw his hands, his crumpled face, and smelt his body warm
she ached to hug him to her breast and claim him as her own.*

*She took the pram and pushed it slowly halfway down the street
she heard a scream ring out and then the sound of running feet
a police car came, the air was full of a 1000 womens cries
they grabbed her arms and held her tight and hate shone in
their eyes.*

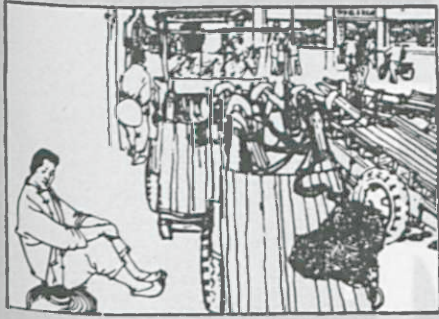
*In the court one day in June the world seemed to stand still
she heard them say she needed help to cope since she'd been ill
as in a dream she heard their words, her head bowed in her
hands
no-one had ever cared enough to try and understand.*

*The judges eyes were cold and hard, she waited still with fear
and when he spoke his voice was harsh with words she could
not hear
'She is a monster of her sex as all her sex must know
so lock her up for 18 months - I can no mercy show.'*

See Law section of issue 29 for background to Nara Well's case.

LI SHUANGSHUANG

Xwang and his transport crew accepted a profit deal during the summer



156. Summer passed and autumn came; in the twinkling of an eye, two months had gone by. They had transported the last load of timber and driven the carts back into the district town and were feeding the horses at the transport station. Xiwang sat to one side staring down the street and dully started to think of his family.



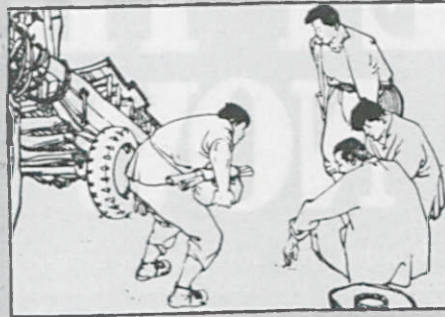
157. Suddenly the sound of an approaching bicycle bell could be heard and Er Chun came riding into sight. As soon as he saw him, Xiwang happily jumped forward and shouted, "Er Chun! Er Chun! So you've come to town! What've you come to buy?"



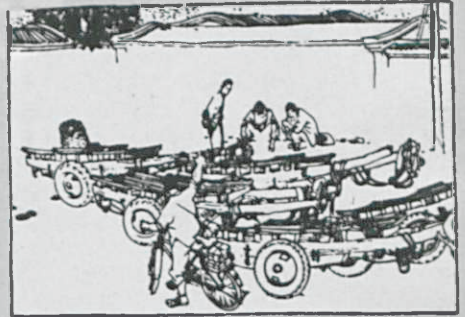
158. Er Chun had come to town to buy some work-point books and had also brought some things for repair. Xiwang asked, "Is your family busy? How are our team's crops?"



159. Xiwang dragged Er Chun to one side and asked, "Your aunt hasn't been making trouble for people recently, has she?" Er Chun replied, "Ha! Made trouble! If she hadn't led the women through the mud and water, the crops wouldn't have grown as well as they have. All you have to do is go back and you'll see what I mean!"



160. On hearing this, Xiwang said, "I would never have thought it! . . ." Er Chun couldn't help laughing. "You would never have thought it? All you have to do is take a look. Come back soon, Aunt Shuangshuang is thinking of you!"



161. Laughing as he said this, Er Chun jumped on his bicycle and rode off.



162. After a few days, Jin Qiao and the others drove their carts back to the village. Just at the edge of the village they saw Shuangshuang leading a group of people. They were singing as they carried the freshly cut maize. The more they sang, the happier they were, and the further they went, the quicker they walked.



163. Seeing the lively scene on either side of the road and hearing laughter from every direction, Xiwang heaved a deep sigh and began to crack his whip in the air to speed home.



164. With a thunder of hoofs the horses turned in to the cart depot. When the carts had been put in position, Xiwang hurried off back home without waiting for old Gengpo's urging.



165. In a flash the news that the men who had been doing long-distance transport had returned was around the village. As soon as her work was finished, Shuangshuang quickly ran home.



166. She ran up to the gate and saw Xiwang splitting firewood with the big ax. He was putting tremendous force behind each blow as if all the trouble and shame of the last few months were being dispersed in one fell swoop.



167. "Mama, mama! Papa's come back!" shouted Xiao Ju as soon as she caught sight of her mother. Xiwang looked up and as soon as he saw that it was Shuangshuang, he involuntarily lowered his head.

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